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Milan & the Lakes day BY day™

17 Smart Ways to See the Region

VISIT…

CENTRAL MILAN
Information
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Piazza Sempione
Arena
Acquario Civico
Torre Branca
Parco Sempione
Triennale di Milano
Castello Sforzesco
Piccolo Teatro
S. Simpliciano
Pinacoteca di Brera
Museo del Risorgimento
Orto Botanico
S. Maria d. Carmine
S. Francesco
Teatro Manzoni
Museo Bagatti Valsecchi
Palazzo Dugnani
Giardini Pubblici
Planetario 'Ulrico Hoepoli'
Museo di Storia Naturale
Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte
Palazzo Senato
Palazzo Serbelloni
Museo di Milano
Prefettura
Museo Poldi Pezzoli
Casa del Manzoni
Teatro alla Scala
Municipio
S. Fedele
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II
Duomo
S. Vito
S. Bablia
Pinacoteca Ambrosiana
S. Sepolcro
Palazzo Arcivescovile
Palazzo Reale
S. Satiro
S. Stefano
S. Alessandro
Palazzo Trivulzio
Torre Velasca
Università degli Studi
Palazzo di Giustizia
Rotonda della Besana
S. Nazaro
S. Eufemia
S. Lorenzo Maggiore
Parco Archeologico e Antiquarium dell'Anfiteatro Romano
Museo Messina
S. Giorgio
Museo Archeologico
S. Maurizio
Tesoro di S. Ambrogio e Mosaici
S. Ambrogio
Università Cattolica
Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo Da Vinci
S. Vittore al Corpo
Cenacolo Viciano
S. Maria delle Grazie
Palazzo delle Stelline
Stazione Nord F.N.M.
Piazzale L. Cadorna
Piazzale F. Baracca
Piazza Tommaseo
Piazza Castello
Largo Quinto Alpini
Largo Cairoli
Piazza della Scala
Piazza F. L. Meda
Piazza S. Babila
Piazza Duomo
Piazza Borromeo
Piazza Mentana
Piazza d. Affari
Piazza T. Grossi
Piazza Diaz
Piazza Missori
Piazza Fontana
Pzetta. Reale
Piazza C. Beccana
Piazza Andrea Ferrari
Piazza d. Vetra
Piazza Cinque Giornate
Piazza S. Pietro in Gessate
Piazza E. Duse
Piazza S. Francesco Romana
Piazza Guglielmo
Piazza del Tricolore
Piazza Risorgimento
Piazzale Aquileia
Piazzale Libia
Largo Augusto
Largo F. Richini
Parco Solari
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Viale Castello
Viale G. Gadio
Viale Emilio Alemagna
Viale Moliere
Viale G. Milton
Viale Vittorio Veneto
Bastioni di Porta Venezia
Corso Buenos Aires
Corso Venezia
Corso Monforte
Corso Concordia
Corso Europa
Corso Vercelli
Corso Magenta
Corso Ventidue Marzo
Corso Porta Vittoria
Corso di Porta Romana
Corso di Porta Ticinese
Corso Italia
Corso Garibaldi
Corso di Porta Nuova
Corso Giuseppe Sirtori
Corso Cavour
Via Montebello
Via della Moscova
Via Fatebenefratelli
Via Pontaccio
Via Fiori Chiari
Via Brera
Via Solferino
Via S. Marco
Via Statuto
Via Palermo
Via Principe Amedeo
Via Filippo Turati
Via Daniele Manin
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Via Borgonuovo
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Via Marina
Via Gesù
Via Monte di Pietà
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Via Alessandro Manzoni
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Via Bigli
Via S. Andrea
Via Cusani
Via dell'Orso
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Via G. Sacchi
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V. Crocefisso
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Via S. Sofia
Via S. Eufemia
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Via Francesco Sforza
Via d. Guastalla
Via P. Andreani
Via A. Albricci
Via Cernaia
Via Solferino
Via Legnano
Via Arena
Via Cosimo del Fante
Via Giuseppe Mercalli
Via G. Vigoni
Via S. Luca
Via S. Croce
Via Calatafimi
Via Alfonso Lamarmora
Via Orti
Via Manfredo Fanti
Via Spartaco
Via Augusto Anfossi
Via Amatore Sciesa
Via Fontana
Via E. Besana
Via S. Barnaba
Via Pace
Via della Commenda
Via Viale Regina Margherita
Via Monte Nero
Via Andrea Maffei
Via Fogazzaro
Via Bergamo
Via Emilio Morosini
Via Emilio Caldara
Via Lazio
Via Carlo Freguglia
Via Luciano Manara
Via Podgora
Via Durini
Via Cerva
Via Conca d. Naviglio
Via Gaudenzio Ferrari
Via Cicco Simonetta
Via Daniele Crespi
Via Ausonio
Via Arbeto
Via Oloma
Via Carocchio
Via Lanzone
Via Circo
Via C. Porzio
Via Nirone
Via Brisa
Via Luini
Via S. Agnese
Via S. Valeria
Via S. Orsola
Via Cappuccio
Via Grosse Carducci
Via Arnaldo De Togni
Via Giovanni De Grassi
Via Zenale
Via Bandello
Via San Vittore
Via Matteo
Via Gian Battista Vico
Via degli Olivetani
Via Lipari
Via P. Giovio
Via Andrea Verga
Via Antonio Panizza
Via Vincenzo Foppa
Via del Caravaggio
Via Montevideo
Via A. Solari
Via R. C. Savoia
Via G. Palavicino
Via Alberto da Giussano
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Via Torquato Tasso
Via Petrarca
Via XX Settembre
Via Ludovico Ariosto
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Viale Molise
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Frommer's™

Milan & the Lakes day BY day™

1st Edition

by Sasha Heseltine

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A Note from the Editorial Director

Organizing your time. That's what this guide is all about.

Other guides give you long lists of things to see and do and then expect you to fit the pieces together. The Day by Day guides are different. These guides tell you the best of everything, and then they show you how to see it *in the smartest, most time-efficient way*. Our authors have designed detailed itineraries organized by time, neighborhood, or special interest. And each tour comes with a bulleted map that takes you from stop to stop.

Hoping to discover rare collections of decorative art, explore the monumental Duomo, and window shop in the Quad d'Oro? Are you looking forward to touring Lake Como and its villas or catching the magnificent Borromeo palace on Lake Maggiore? Whatever your interest or schedule, the Day by Days give you the smartest routes to follow. Not only do we take you to the top attractions, hotels, and restaurants, but we also help you access those special moments that locals get to experience—those "finds" that turn tourists into travelers.

The Day by Days are also your top choice if you're looking for one complete guide for all your travel needs. The best hotels and restaurants for every budget, the greatest shopping values, the wildest nightlife—it's all here.

Why should you trust our judgment? Because our authors personally visit each place they write about. They're an independent lot who say what they think and would never include places they wouldn't recommend to their best friends. They're also open to suggestions from readers. If you'd like to contact them, please send your comments our way at feedback@frommers.com, and we'll pass them on.

Enjoy your Day by Day guide—the most helpful travel companion you can buy. And have the trip of a lifetime.

Warm regards,

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director
Frommer's Travel Guides

About the Author

Sasha Heseltine has been in travel publishing as both writer and editor for many years, starting out at Dorling Kindersley in London. She worked on mini-guides for Berlitz before heading for the West Country to Compass Maps, where she produced 48 InsideOut map-guides to cities across the world. She now works as a freelancer, and recently edited the Frommer's With Your Family guides to Florida, Naples, and Tuscany & Umbria, as well as the Day by Day guide to Istanbul. She has also written the *Frommer's Copenhagen Day by Day* guide.

Acknowledgments

A big thank you to Fiona and Karen for their hard work. And love to George, as ever.

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a star-rating system. Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). In addition to the **star-rating system,** we also use a kids to point out the best bets for families. Within each tour, we recommend cafes, bars, or restaurants where you can take a break. Each of these stops appears in a shaded box marked with a coffee-cup-shaped bullet .

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	**DISC**	Discover	**V**	Visa
DC	Diners Club	**MC**	MasterCard		

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A Note on Prices

In the "Take a Break" and "Best Bets" sections of this book, we have used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for 1 night in a hotel (the price of a double-occupancy room) or the cost of an entree (main meal) at a restaurant. Use the following table to decipher the dollar signs:

Cost	Hotels	Restaurants
$	under $100	under $10
$$	$100–$200	$10–$20
$$$	$200–$300	$20–$30
$$$$	$300–$400	$30–$40
$$$$$	over $400	over $40

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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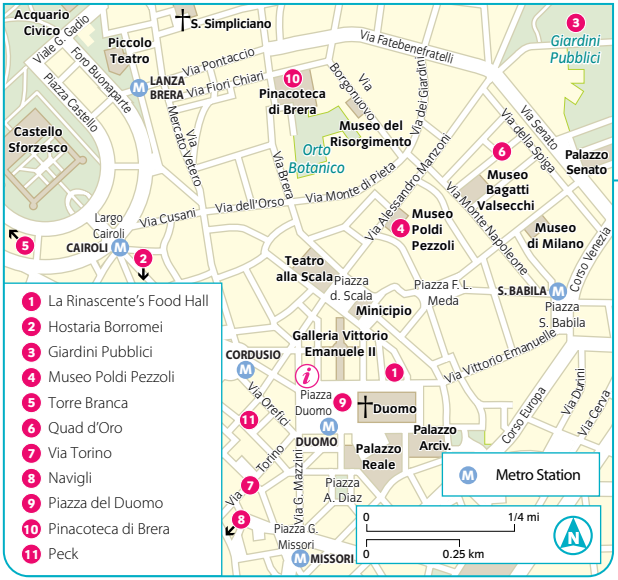
17 Favorite **Moments**

Central **Milan**



1. La Rinascente's Food Hall
2. Hostaria Borromei
3. Giardini Pubblici
4. Museo Poldi Pezzoli
5. Torre Branca
6. Quad d'Oro
7. Via Torino
8. Navigli
9. Piazza del Duomo
10. Pinacoteca di Brera
11. Peck

The **Lakes**

12. Varenna
13. Hotel Excelsior Splendide
14. Villa del Balbianello
15. San Fedele Church
16. Laveno cable-car
17. Santa Caterina del Sasso Ballaro Monastery

The grandeur of the Duomo and Milan's galleries and museums, bulging with rare artworks, are just the start of your exploration of the city. You can add to that the chic cafés and restaurants, the glamorous residents, and the upmarket and sharply fashion-conscious stores, and then mix in the elegant resorts around lakes Como and Maggiore for a more laid-back time on your Milanese holiday. Here are some of the best experiences I enjoy in this hip, booming Italian city and around the Lakes that lie to the north.

1 **Lunching overlooking the spires** and spikes of the Duomo roof in department store La Rinascente's seventh-floor food hall; sit outside on the terrace at òbikà for its excellent organic mozzarella dishes. *See p 88.*

2 **Savoring a long and leisurely lunch** under the vines at one of my favorite (and very atmospheric) Milanese restaurants, Hostaria Borromei. Try the *osso bucco* (veal shank) and fresh fish of the day. *See p 87.*

3 **Walking off that lengthy lunch in the Giardini Pubblici** on a Sunday afternoon, while watching the local children dressed in their finery playing on the carousel. *See p 78.*

4 **Getting a taste for Italian decorative arts** at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli. Take time to explore all the collections, from the fine timepieces to the Venetian glass and Renaissance masterpieces. *See p 10.*

5 **Zooming at high speed up the Torre Branca** elevator and catching sight of the Parco Sempione and the rooftops of Milan laid out below. *See p 77.*

6 **Joining the elegant ladies of Brera** for a window-shopping trip around the designer delights of the Quadrilatero d'Oro and afterwards joining them for a delicately constructed early-evening *aperitivi* (cocktails) at Sant'Ambroeus. *See p 73.*

7 **Shopping in Via Torino**; although the Quad d'Oro is the most exclusive shopping area, the shoe stores and international chain boutiques along busy Via Torino are perfect for bargain hunters. *See p 72.*

8 **Exploring the canals of Navigli** on a Saturday evening; you see some of Milan's more extreme fashions—hippies, punks, and Goths—while enjoying great street music

Piazza del Duomo, Milan.

Enjoy a drink by Lake Como, Varenna.

entertainment and a wide choice of bars and restaurants. ***See p 80.***

9 Hanging out in Piazza del Duomo. The epicenter of the city is the place to watch Milanese life flow by. Pay a call on the majestic interior of the Duomo and afterwards sip an *espresso* at Zucca in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. ***See p 79.***

10 Admiring the vast collections of religious art at Pinacoteca di Brera and taking a respite by strolling among the herb gardens and flowerbeds of the **Orto Botanico**. ***See p 13.***

11 Buying organic bread, salami, and tasty tomatoes from Peck, Milan's premier delicatessen. Take your purchases to the Parco Sempione to eat a picnic under blue summer skies. ***See p 14.***

12 Walking along the lakeside esplanade of Varenna, exploring the art galleries and enjoying a chilled *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) in Bar Il Molo as the sun goes down over Lake Como. ***See p 135.***

13 Eating lunch on the Lake Terrace of Hotel Excelsior Splendide in Bellagio; a special treat at a reasonable price for pasta, salad, *secondi* (entree), and dessert. Later on, take time to investigate the expensive shops lining the pretty Lake Como village's steep, cobbled streets. ***See p 141.***

14 Following in the footsteps of James Bond; take a tour around Lake Como's Villa del Balbianello in Lenno to see where a slice of action from Casino Royale was filmed. Explore the gardens, which slope elegantly down towards the lake. ***See p 20.***

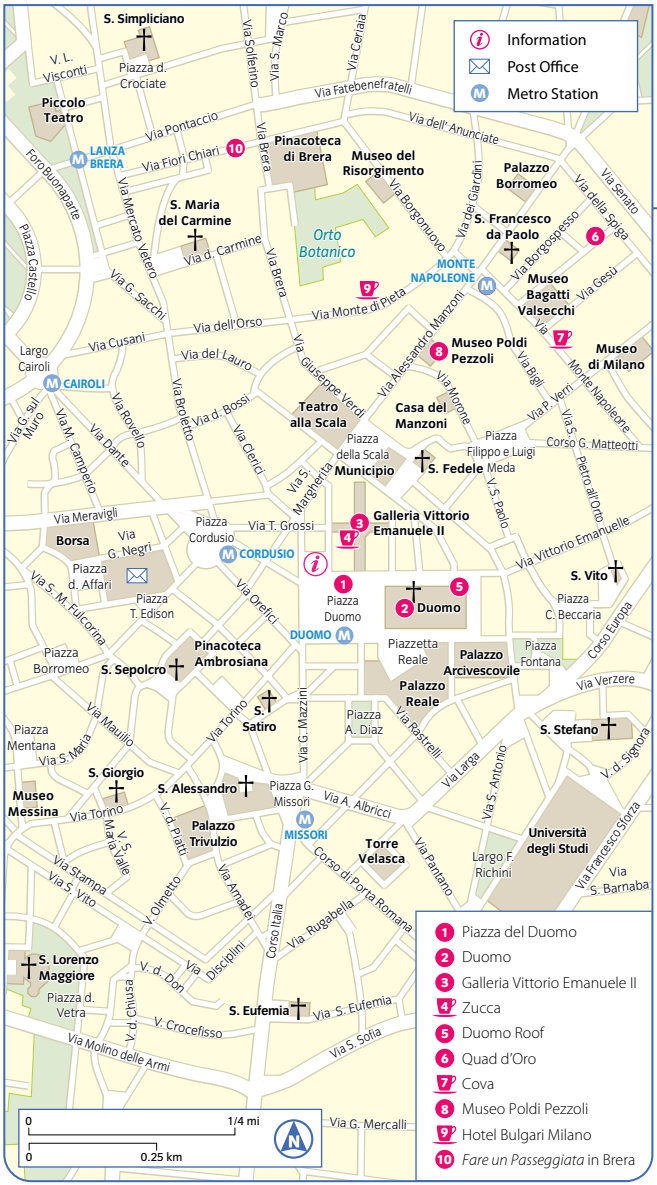
15 Sneaking in to the back of the Romanesque church of San Fedele in Como to watch a wedding, full of joy and laughter. ***See p 56.***

16 Catching the 15-minute cable-car ride to Sasso del Ferro from Laveno to enjoy a hike across the hills of Val Cuvia and mighty views across the waters of Lake Maggiore. If you're lucky, you'll catch sight of buzzards and eagles. ***See p 144.***

17 Exploring the evocative monastery at Santa Caterina del Sasso Ballaro, which clings to the cliffside above the eastern shore of Lake Maggiore. A community of Dominican monks has been in residence since 1230. ***See p 146.***

1 The Best **Full-Day Tours**

The Best of Milan **in One Day**



Milan is elegant, chaotic, fume-ridden, and utterly beguiling in turn. Traffic chokes the streets, it can be bitterly cold in winter and stiflingly hot in summer, and yet its architecture is majestic, the robust Northern Italian cuisine warming, the stores stylish, and the people surprisingly welcoming. Develop a feel for the city on your first day: see the soaring Duomo, sip strong black *espresso* in a traditional café, and window-shop in the opulent streets of the Quadrilatero d'Oro. See the best of its art treasures and eat delicious local dishes in the Milanese style. **START: Metro Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.**

1 ★★★ Piazza del Duomo. Central to Milanese life since the city was conquered by the Romans in 220BC and known as Mediolanum, this vast traffic-free piazza sees the business of local life passing through it daily, added to by the bustle of tourists peering at the majestic Duomo (see bullet 2). Early Christian churches were built here, but the square took on its present form following the Unification of Italy in 1861, when medieval buildings were demolished and splendid new ones erected by Giuseppe Mengoni (1829–77), including the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, on your left as you look at the Duomo, as well as the equestrian statue of Vittorio Emanuele II in the middle of the square. ***30 min. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.***

2 ★★ Duomo. Dominating its vast traffic-free piazza, the Gothic Duomo soars majestically over the heart of Milan. The world's third-largest church (behind St Peter's in Rome and Seville Cathedral), its embellished façade is encrusted with some 2,300 statues and gargoyles. Pinnacles bristle on the domed roof, topped by a 5m (16ft) gilded figure of the Virgin Mary.

Inside the Duomo, the floors are of complex patterned marble while light streams in through jewel-like stained-glass windows. Rows of marble pillars divide the space into five aisles and the side chapels are dotted with Renaissance and Mannerist tombs. The crypt reveals the star-shaped 10th-century foundations of the original church and showcases a few fragments of

Piazza del Duomo.

Building the Duomo

Building started on the exterior of the Duomo in the late 14th century to a design by Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351–1402); the marble slabs for the Neo-Gothic façade were transported from quarries along Lake Maggiore (see p 142) into the city along the Navigli canals (see p 80, bullet 12), which were specially constructed for this task. Consecrated in 1418, the Duomo was not deemed complete until 1965, when the mammoth cast-bronze doors were finally finished.

mosaic, but what impresses me most is British conceptual artist Mark Wallinger's evocative Via Dolorosa (2002) in the Treasury, a flickering video metaphor for Christ's last journey to the cross. Here you will also find the gilded tomb of Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan and leader of the Counter-Reformation, who died in 1584. 🕘 *1¼ hr. Piazza del Duomo.* ☎ *02 89 40 41 29. www.duomomilano.it. Admission 1€ Duomo; 2€ crypt; treasury free; 1€ tomb of Carlo Borromeo. Duomo daily 7am–7pm; baptistery 9am–5pm; treasury and tomb of Carlo Borromeo Mon–Fri 9.30am–1.30pm, 2–6pm; Sat 9.30am–1.30pm, 2–5pm. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.*

3 ★★ Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. A minute's stroll from the Duomo, Milan's first, and certainly its most exclusive, shopping arcade connects the north side of Piazza del Duomo to Piazza Scala, site of the famous opera house (see p 106). The gallery was designed by Giuseppe Mengoni (see bullet 1), who died in a fall from the scaffolding the day before it opened in 1878. The vast entrance arch leads to a glass arcade with marble floors and four 'arms' lined with smart

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Piazza del Duomo.

shops, cafés, restaurants, and bars—for me the perfect way to soak up the gallery's genteel 19th-century atmosphere. Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Tod's, and Prada share floor space with Zucca (see p 92), Biffi, and Il Savini, some of Milan's finest and oldest eating establishments, where the local elite like to dine and be seen after a night at the opera. Under the 40m (131ft) central glass dome of the gallery, you'll spot giggling crowds dancing on a certain body part of a little mosaic bull. Follow suit and you're supposedly guaranteed a lifetime of happiness. 🕘 *45 min. Piazza del Duomo. No phone. Open 24 hr, some shops and cafés close Sun–Mon. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.*

4 ★★★ **Zucca.** On the corner of Piazza del Duomo and the Galleria, Milan's grandest of gran caffès serves great coffees and aperitivi at the elaborate wooden counter, which is backed by a wall of elaborate Klimt-like mosaics. Locals stand at the bar while tourists spend much more money to perch at little tables on the covered terrace in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. ***Piazza del Duomo, 21. ☎ 02 86 46 44 35. www.caffemiani.it. $$.***

Zucca.

5 ★★★ kids **Duomo Roof.** Back across Piazza del Duomo, to the left of the cathedral, is an elevator whose entrance is craftily hidden on the north (left-hand) exterior wall of the Duomo. Choose a clear day to travel up among the statuary for unrivalled views over mandarin-colored rooftops and even to the mountains in the north. Look out for

Getting Around Milan

Milan's most famous sights are within walking distance of each other, with Castello Sforzesco (see p 31, bullet 2), the Duomo (see p 7, bullet 2), and Via Montenapoleone all 20 minutes apart. However, the public transport system, run by ATM, is a cheap and effective alternative to walking.

Travel tickets cost 1€ and they are valid for 75 minutes on all three systems: metros, trams, and buses (see p 162-163). Metro stations are well signposted and trains frequent and speedy. I found Lines 1 (red, with stops for the Duomo and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II) and 3 (yellow, with a stop at Via Montenapoleone) the most useful for sightseeing.

the ugly 1950s' proportions of the Torre Velasca (this brash tower sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb among all the church spires) and the Madonnina (see box, *Milan's Favorite Lady*, p 55), a large gilded figure of the Virgin Mary adorning the Duomo spire. I don't have a good head for heights, but the roof is fenced in and it's so fascinating being up among the gargoyles that any nerves I had vanished. 🕘 ***45 min. Piazza del Duomo. Admission 7€ by elevator, 5€ by stairs. Daily 9am–8.45pm. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.***

6 ★★★ **Quad d'Oro.** A 10-minute walk along crowded shopping street Corso Vittorio Emanuele II brings you to the oblong of streets bounded by Via Montenapoleone and Via della Spiga, which together boast an even higher concentration of exclusive designer shops than London's Bond Street or Hollywood's Rodeo Drive. Interspersed with antique dealers, upmarket cafés, and frighteningly expensive jewelers, the stores make for an intense shopping experience in a series of charming old palazzi. 🕘 ***2 hrs. Quadrilatero d'Oro. Open Tues–Sat, some Mon am. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone.***

7 ★★ **Cova.** Give the credit cards a rest and join the smart shopping crowd for coffee in this wonderfully old-fashioned Quad d'Oro coffee bar. Prices are outrageous, even to stand at the bar, but it's worth it for the coffee-and-cake experience. ***Via Montenapoleone, 8. ☎ 02 76 00 55 99. www.pasticceriacova.com. $$$.***

8 ★★★ **Museo Poldi Pezzoli.** Five minutes along Via Manzoni from the Quad d'Oro, this gem of a museum is often wrongly overlooked. Art lover and aristocrat Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli donated his extraordinary collection of paintings and decorative arts to Milan in 1879, and they are exhibited in his elegant 17th-century palazzo. Later benefactors have added to his collections. Use an audio-guide because information in English is patchy. The highly decorative rooms on the ground floor showcase Oriental and medieval armor, Asian rugs, and rare books. Upstairs the extravagant rooms contain family

Take the elevator for a closer look at the Duomo roof.

Monday Closing

Don't get caught out: nearly all museums and churches (including several in this chapter) and roughly half the shops in Milan close on Monday. There's still lots to do, however: explore the Duomo (see p 7, bullet 2), enjoy the landscaped gardens of Parco Sempione (see p 14, bullet 4), and visit the boutiques of the Quad d'Oro (see p 73, bullet 6) when they open at around 2pm. Otherwise head out of town on Monday and spend the day discovering the idyllic villages and grand villas of Lake Como (see p 124).

portraits, one of the world's most important collections of priceless timepieces (see p 41, bullet 7), Limoges enamels, Murano glass, and stained-glass by artist Giuseppe Bertini (1825–98), showing scenes from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Best of all are the paintings *Portrait of an Unknown Man* by Andrea Mantegna (c.1455), and the ethereal *Portrait of a Young Girl* by Antonio del Pollaiolo (1475), which hang in the gilded Salone Dorata alongside Bellini, Botticelli, and della Francesca. 🕘 ***1½ hr. Via Manzoni, 12. ☎ 02 79 63 34. www.museopoldipezzoli.it. Admission 8€ adults, 5.5€ ages 11–17 and over 60. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone.***

9 ★★ **Hotel Bulgari Milano.** I like to take time for an *aperitivo* in Milan's current hottest glamour spot (see p 116), two streets up from Via Manzoni. Perch at the cool, dark bar or grab a hot seat on the low sofas outside to enjoy exotic cocktails in the softly lit, landscaped gardens. ***Via Fratelli Gabba, 7b. ☎ 02 80 58 051. www.bulgarihotels.com. $$$.***

10 ★★★ ***Fare un Passeggiata* in Brera.** From the Bulgari, head up Via Brera for some gentle exercise as you join *il tutto* Milano on a nightly stroll (*un passeggiata*) around the inviting cobbled streets of fashionable Brera. Peer into sophisticated design shops and contemporary galleries (many are still open at 10pm), stop off for an *espresso* or glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) at a street-side bar, enjoy the street entertainment, and marvel at the Italians dress sense of style and flair. 🕘 ***30 min. Via Fiori Chiari and Via Fiori Oscuri. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera or Line 3 to Montenapoleone.***

Window shopping, Quad d'Oro.

The Best of Milan in Two Days

Here's your chance to see an immense collection of paintings and sculpture in the very best of Milan's galleries and museums. For a midday break, seek out the best of Italian delicatessens and eat a picnic in the gloriously green Parco Sempione before visiting Leonardo's *The Last Supper,* probably one of the most famous artworks in the world. In the evening, stretch your legs by wandering around the busy canals, and round off the day with delicious pizza in one of the Navigli's favorite ***trattorie***. **START: Metro Line 3 to Montenapoleone.**

1 ★★★ Pinacoteca di Brera. Milan's leading art gallery is located on the first floor of a 17th-century palazzo and built around a two-story arcaded courtyard. With 38 (almost) chronological rooms crammed with medieval masterpieces, Renaissance altarpieces, baroque and Venetian paintings, Macchiaioli School (Italian Impressionists), and a few Surrealist images, it's best to cherry-pick among the offerings. There are few signs in English but the major works speak for themselves. The first highlight is in Room 4: Gentile da Fabriano's golden *Valle Romita Polyptych* (c.1410), painted in a spiky Gothic style. Andrea Mantegna's weirdly foreshortened *Cristo Morto* hangs in Room 6 and was painted c.1490 in subdued colors as befits the theme of death. Renaissance landmarks include Raphael's exquisite *Marriage of the Virgin* (1504, currently being restored in Room 18) and Piero della Francesca's sublime *Montefeltro Altarpiece* (1474) in Room 24. Caravaggio leads the way for 17th-century painting in Room 29 with his gloomy *Supper at Emmaus* (1601*).* Other great names include El Greco, Bellini, Tiepolo, Correggio, Canaletto, Picasso, and Braque. For more information, see p 13, bullet 1. ***2 hrs. Via Brera, 28. 02 72 26 31. www.brera.beniculturali.it. Admission 10€ adults, 2.5€ ages 11–14 and over 60. Tues–Sun 8.30am–7.15pm. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera or Line 3 to Montenapoleone.***

2 ★ Museo Teatrale alla Scala. A short stroll down Via Brera brings you to the opera house La Scala's museum. For me the best part of a visit is peeking into the auditorium of the neighboring La Scala (see p 106), the world's most famous opera house, in all its red velvet and gilded finery. You'll see grand saloons hung with glittering chandeliers where champagne is served during performance intervals to the great and good of Milanese society. In addition, a series of rooms relate the story of La Scala through musical scores, historic

Museo Teatrale alla Scala.

Building the Brera

The Pinacoteca di Brera began life as a palazzo, designed in 1651 by Italian baroque architect Francesco Maria Ricchini (1584–1658) for the Jesuits as a college and botanical garden. The Pinacoteca di Brera was subsequently founded by the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in 1776; Napoleon considerably added to the collection at the turn of the 19th century by stripping monasteries and churches in northern Italy of their treasures and reinstalling them in the Pinacoteca. Small wonder that some of Italy's finest religious art is now on display here. Napoleon's contribution to this collection is acknowledged by a massive equestrian bronze, sculpted by Antonio Canova in 1806, which dominates the courtyard of the gallery.

instruments, marble busts, and documents dedicated to illustrious musicians and singers such as Toscanini, Verdi, and Maria Callas. Temporary exhibitions paying homage to opera stars are on the top floor. 🕘 ***45 min. Largo Ghiringhelli, 1. ☎ 02 88 79 74 73. www.teatroallascala.org. Admission 5€ adults, 4€ ages 4–17 and over 60. Daily 9am–12.30pm; 1.30–5.30pm. Closed public holidays. Bus: 1a, 2a, 10, 12, 14, 15, 26, 29, 33, 48, 67, 68, 89, 2A, 5A, 6A, 173E. Metro: Line 1 to Cordusio or Duomo, Line 3 to Duomo or Montenapoleone.***

Peck.

3 ★★★ **Peck.** Head along Via Santa Margherita, and via Mazzini, and then a dog leg off to the right leads to Via Spadari. Here an upmarket deli—the favorite store of the Milanese bourgeoisie—is stuffed to the gunnels with salamis, cheeses, breads, luscious tomatoes, and pastries perfect for picnics on the hoof. Buy whatever you fancy and trek up Via Dante to the Parco Sempione to eat alfresco. ***Via Spadari, 9. ☎ 02 80 23 161. www.peck.it. $$.***

4 ★★★ kids **Parco Sempione.** Enjoy a picnic lunch in tranquil meadows dotted with trees providing welcome summertime shade. Milan's biggest green space covers 46 hectares (115 acres) and was landscaped by Emilio Alemagna in the English country-garden style: lawns crossed with paths, copses, follies, and an artificial lake. It is just the place to retreat from the noise of the city and stroll or jog off a

Parco Sempione.

heavy lunch. Finished in 1893, the gardens now incorporate the Acquario (see p 33, bullet 4) and the Palazzo del'Arte. The 108m (354ft) steel Torre Branca (see p 77, bullet 1) houses a trendy bar, the Just Cavalli Café (see p 98), owned by famed fashion designer Roberto Cavalli. Although not an issue during the day, I would not

Booking for *The Last Supper*

It's a challenge but well worth the effort: tickets to see Leonardo da Vinci's (1452–1519) iconic *The Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie (see p 16, bullet 5) are as elusive as golden eggs. Try the official website at www.cenacolovinciano.org, or call ☎ 02 89 42 11 46 (tickets are 8€ from the website). In my experience, tickets are usually booked out for the summer months by early May, but are easier to procure out of the tourist season from September onwards if you can book about three weeks in advance and be as flexible as possible. If you have no luck on the Cenacolo website, try turning up at Santa Marie delle Grazie on the off-chance that someone has cancelled, but otherwise the only assured way to get to see the famous fresco on a set date is by taking a guided tour. Website www.tickitaly.com offers expensive (currently 28€) 15-minute viewings of *The Last Supper* with an English-language guide. The tour company **Zani Viaggi** (www.zaniviaggi.it) runs daily, guided bus or walking tours of the Duomo (see p 25, bullet 1), La Scala (see p 106), and *The Last Supper,* at a cost of around 55€. Finally, remember that Santa Maria delle Grazie is always closed on Mondays.

The Last Supper, *1495–97, Leonardo da Vinci.*

advise walking in the park after dark, especially around the Arco della Pace (see p 77, bullet 3) at the northwestern entrance, where a number of unsavory characters like to hang out. 🕘 ***1–2 hrs. Piazza Castello. Admission free. Daily 7am–7pm. Metro: Lines 1 and 2 to Cadorna. See p 31, bullet 1, and p 77, bullet 2.***

5 ★★★ ***Il Cenacolo*** **in Santa Maria delle Grazie.** It's a 10-minute walk along Corso Magenta to Milan's greatest art treasure. Painted for Milanese ruler Ludovico il Moro by Leonardo da Vinci between 1495 and 1497, *The Last Supper* adorns the back wall of the refectory, just off the cloisters in the Dominican convent attached to the Lombard Renaissance church of Santa Maria delle Grazie (see p 29, bullet 7). The famous fresco is climate-controlled for preservation and viewed in pre-allocated periods of 15 minutes. Leonardo's masterpiece depicts Christ revealing to his disciples that one will betray him;

Aperitivo Time

At cocktail hour (starting at around 6.30pm and lasting until about 10.30pm), a tapas-like spread of olives, crudités, cold pasta dishes, rice and green salads, salamis, and breads make an appearance in every Milanese bar worth its salt, often alongside happy hour for wines and cocktails. It's a clever way to induce people in and helps drinkers hold their alcohol as they forage for food. Be warned: as much as locals can be fun-loving and exuberant, drinking too much is generally frowned upon.

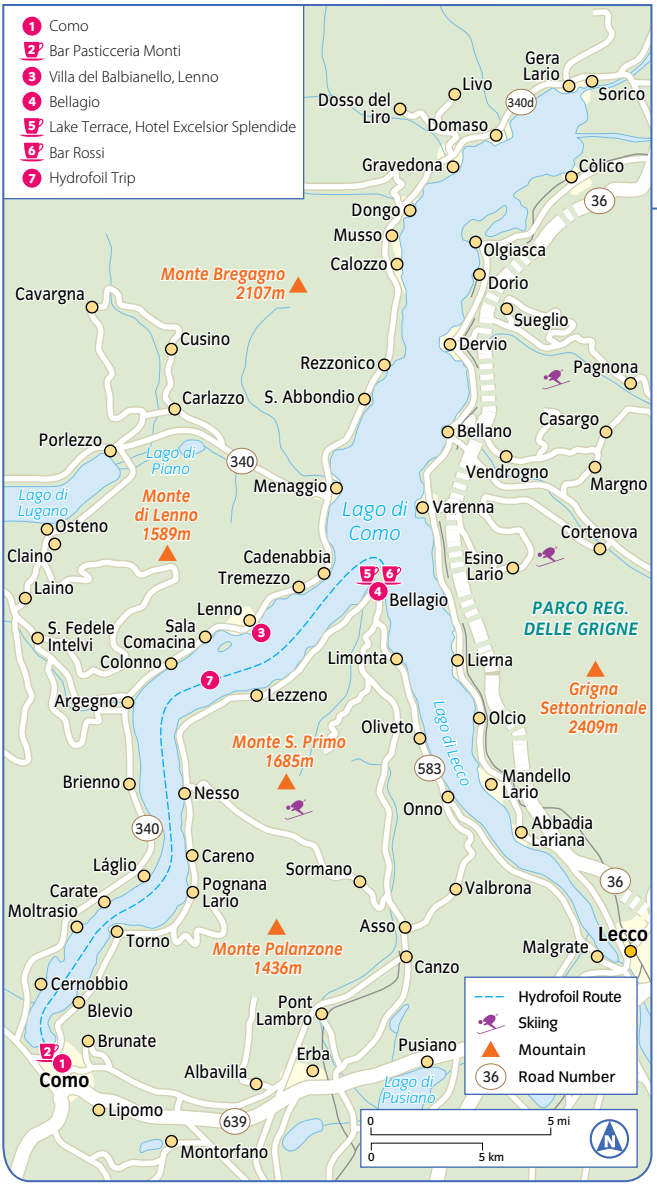
horror and disbelief are etched on every face, while Jesus remains resigned. Judas sits to the left of Jesus (as we look at the fresco), leaning away from him; the bag of silver is clearly visible in his right hand. Due to da Vinci experimenting with his painting technique by applying tempera straight on to the walls of the refectory, the fresco began to deteriorate virtually on completion and has suffered several ham-fisted restoration attempts. The latest clean-up was in the 1990s; the colors are muted but they do resemble the original fresco. Also see box, The Forgotten Painting, p 28. ***30 min. Piazza Santa Maria delle Grazie, 2. ☎ 02 89 42 11 46. www.cenacolovinciano.org. Admission 8€ adults, 4.75€ ages 4–17 and over 60. Tour company prices vary. Tues–Sun 8.15am–6.45pm. Metro: Lines 1 and 2 to Cadorna.***

6 ★★ **Navigli.** The 20-minute walk down to Milan's canals can take in a visit to arcaded Sant'Ambrogio (see p 28, bullet 6) or the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Technica (see p 49, bullet 7). Crowded and full of life, the Navigli canals come into their own in the evening when the young and trendy of Milan come out to play. Bar tables spill out on to the streets, buskers sing, restaurateurs shout their wares, and bohemian types promenade up and down. These few streets are refreshingly casual in ambience, with little of the dressy Milanese *bella figura* (love of dressing well) evident in the city center; it's one of the few places where you will see Italian punks, hippies, and Goths. Navigli is just the place for a relaxed drink and late-night supper. ***1–3 hrs. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. See p 80, bullet 12.***

7 ★★ **Tabou.** A great menu of fruity and sticky cocktails and generous plates of stuffed olives, local cheeses, and savory snacks make this little canal-side bar the ideal pit-stop for an early evening aperitivo before heading for pizza at Pizzeria La Tradizionale (see p 89). ***Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 62. ☎ 02 83 23 855. $.***

The Navigli canals come into their own in the evening.

The Best of Lake Como in One Day



It's time for a break from the cheery hum of the city and its innumerable art treasures. Where better to escape the pressure-cooker of Milan than Lake Como, Italy's deepest lake, which sprawls like an inverted 'Y' in the foothills of the Alps. Just an hour north of Milan by train, Como is a peaceful suntrap of a millpond backed by mountains. I had a fantastic day out exploring the genteel town of Como before boarding a ferry to spot some glossily extravagant villas and lunching lakeside in the ridiculously photogenic village of Bellagio. **START: Stazione Nord, Milan.**

1 ★★ **Como.** Arriving in Como Nord, turn left out of the station to see the glittering lake straight ahead across the promenade; the ferries dock here. Despite unprepossessing suburbs, Como is an attractive and sophisticated town, and so spend some time exploring its ancient heart, which maintains the original Roman street plan, cobbled streets, and medieval walls. Start in Piazza Cavour, right opposite the ferry terminal, once the center of silk-making and today backed by expensive hotels and bars. Take a look around the Duomo (see p 7, bullet 1), a striking mix of Gothic and Renaissance architecture and the 10th-century Romanesque Basilica di San Fedele church (see p 126, bullet 4) in cobbled Piazza San Fedele, Como's corn market in times long past. If you stay overnight in Como, the neoclassical Villa Olmo (see p 129, bullet 1) is worth visiting; it has lakeside formal gardens that are beautifully floodlit at night. 🕘 *1½ hr. Piazza Cavour. See p 124.*

2 ★★ kids **Bar Pasticceria Monti.** Retrace your steps to the ferry terminal. Because this is Italy, the ferry you will catch as part of today's tour will almost definitely be late. Don't waste the glorious sunshine hanging round in the tiny boat terminus; take a seat at Bar Monti on elegant lakefront Piazza Cavour and keep one eye on what's happening across the road. Order a cold birra or indulge a mid-morning sweet tooth with syrupy pastries. When your ferry looms across the lake, pay the bill (il conto) and saunter across the road to catch your ride. *Piazza Cavour, 21, Como.* ☎ *03 13 01 165. $.*

The Cathedral (Duomo), Como.

Getting There

Buy tickets for Lake Como at Stazione Nord (also called Cadorna): it is just outside Cadorna FMN Trienniale on Metro lines 1 and 2. A return ticket (*andata ritorno*) on FS-run trains costs 7€. Trains run once an hour in winter at 42 minutes past the hour and every 20 minutes in summer. The journey time is one hour. Buy snacks and water at the station because there are no facilities on-board the trains. The journey itself saves the best till last: traveling through Milan's suburbs and then through flat farmland—it's somewhat disappointing, but when you get out of Lago Nord station at Como the sparkling lake views make up for any monotony.

If you're driving, it's around an hour on the autostrada A9 (locally signposted Milano–Laghi) up to Como, usually in heavy traffic. SGEA coaches depart from Autostazione Garibaldi in Piazza Freud in Milan, but cost the same as the train and take much longer.

3 ★★★ Villa del Balbianello, Lenno. After 90 minutes and several stops at small villages along the way, hop off the ferry at Lenno to visit Villa del Balbianello; you'll see it standing on the headland on the west of the lake as the ferry rounds the shoreline. Built by Cardinal Durini in the 17th century, its latest claim to fame is that the house and grounds featured prominently in the Bond movie *Casino Royale* (2006).

Inside the villa, endless, priceless French furniture is complemented by South American, Chinese, and African artwork, squirreled away by previous owner, explorer Guido Monzino (1928–88). There is also a small museum showcasing his expeditions. To my mind, the high point of a visit to the villa is the ornate landscaped garden and the three-arched loggia behind the house.

1 hr. Via Comoedia, Balbianello,

Villa del Balbianello, Lenno.

Lenno. ☎ 03 44 56 110. www.fondoambiente.it/en/beni/villa-del-balbianello-fai-propreties.asp. Admission (garden only) 5€ adults, 2.5€ children aged 4–12; garden and villa (compulsory tour) without reservation 11€ adults, 6€ children aged 4–12; with reservation 8€ adults, 4€ children aged 4–12. Mid-Mar–mid-Nov Tues, Thurs–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed: late Nov–early Mar.

4 ★★★ **Bellagio.** Just across the lake from Lenno and lying scenically on the promontory of Como's inverted 'Y', adorable Bellagio has just about managed to avoid selling out to the tourist euro. The shady promenade along the lakefront is bordered by a scattering of chic hotels, bars, and cafés, while pretty alleyways straggle uphill in steps, unchanged since medieval times. Classy souvenir shops line the streets; best buys include leather bags, belts, and shoes as well as traditionally painted wooden trays in shades of turquoise, burnt orange, and gold. Just don't expect too many bargains. Still, this is a lovely place to linger, have lunch overlooking the lake, and if you have time, inspect a couple of the fine villas that surround the village (see p 131, bullets 8 and 9). 🕘 *3–4 hrs.*

5 ★★★ **Lake Terrace, Hotel Excelsior Splendide.** Treat yourself to an informal lunch under a vine-covered trellis with far-reaching views over Lake Como to Lenno on the far bank. Sit at one of the tables, jauntily covered with checked cloths, and enjoy a light lunch from the menu of fluffy omelets, simply cooked pastas with delicious tomato sauces, and tiramisu. Choose a light rosé, sit back, and revel in the beauty of the shoreline. I like this restaurant for its lovely position, unpretentious service, and unbelievably good value—a rare find on pricey Lake Como. *Via Lungo Lario Manzoni, 28, Bellagio. ☎ 03 19 50 225. www.hsplendide.com. $.*

Souvenir shop in Bellagio.

6 ★★ **Bar Rossi.** Just missed the boat back to Como? Pass the time until the next ferry over an enormous gelato or a thick espresso under Bar Rossi's elegant lakefront arcades, conveniently opposite the ferry dock so you can see the boats coming in. If you choose to stay in Bellagio overnight, eat decent pasta and pizza here in the wondrously tiled Art Nouveau dining room. *Piazza Mazzini, 22, Bellagio. ☎ 03 19 50 196. $.*

7 ★★★ kids **Hydrofoil Trip.** See the magical sunlight playing on the mountains as you zip down the lake on the return leg to Como. The sense of speed as the hydrofoil rises on its front legs out of the water brings out the child in everyone.

Swimming Around Bellagio

Oddly enough for such a popular holiday destination, there is no longer a public pool at Bellagio: the Lido now stands empty and forlorn on the southern edge of the town. There are several ways to get your dip in the lake, however. Splash out an extortionate 60€ for a day's languishing by the pool at opulent Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni (see p 140) on the tip of the promontory, or alternatively take a five-minute taxi-ride from the rank by the ferry dock to the pebble-strewn public beach at Guggiate, just southwest of Bellagio. Be warned: It's free entry but there are no facilities, and so take a towel with you. Arrange a pick-up time when you're dropped off or you will face the same hot and thirsty 25-minute walk back into Bellagio that I had. Many visitors make the 10-minute ferry hop across to Menaggio (see p 134, bullet 5) and swim at the luxurious Lido Giardino, *Via Roma 11, ☎ 03 44 32 007, www.lidogiardino.com.* Admission is 10€ for the day.

Look out for the attractive lakeside villages of **Lezzeno** and **Torno** on the eastern shoreline, **Tremezzo** (see p 133, bullet 3) and **Brienno** to the west, and the splendid Palladian villas of Melzi (see p 131, bullet 9), Cipressi, and Monastero near Bellagio. There are at least four hydrofoil services per day in the summer months. From Como, take the train back to Milan. ◴ ***50 min. to Como, including one stop at Tremezzo. Cost one-way 11€ adult, 5.60€ under-15s. www.navigazionelaghi.it.*** ●

Look out for the village of Brienno during your hydrofoil trip.

2 The Best Special-Interest Tours

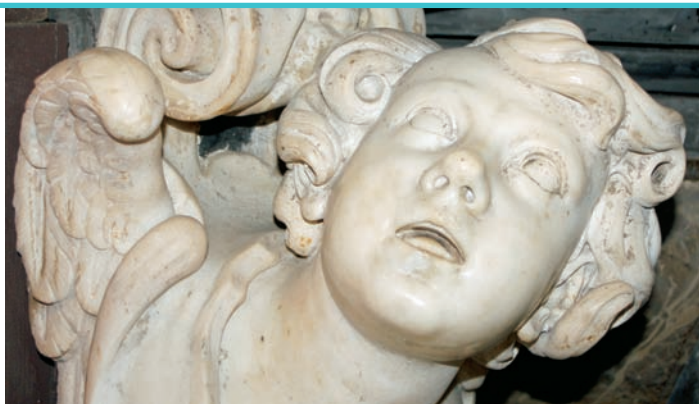
Historic Churches

With more than 100 churches in the city, Milan has been an important center of Christianity since Constantine sanctioned the Christian faith in 313AD. Many of the churches lie on pagan origins from the days when pre-Christian Romans settled in Mediolanum, where layer upon layer of history can be stripped back to these early remains. Here's a tour of some of the most important churches and their treasures. Remember to dress modestly to visit churches; no shorts and no bare shoulders for anyone. **START: Metro Lines 1 or 3 to Duomo.**

1 ★★ Duomo. Gigantic Piazza del Duomo has always been the beating heart of Milan. Even in the 4th century it was the religious centerpoint of the city (see p 7, bullet 1). The construction of the mammoth Gothic cathedral (see p 7) we see today began in 1386, an ambitious building plan pushed through after typically Italian in-fighting between Archbishop Antonio da Saluzzo and Duke Gian Galeazzo, from the all-powerful Visconti dynasty. The Duomo's present site was initially occupied by the 3rd-century Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, which was joined a hundred years later by Ambrogio's Basilica di Santa Lecia. A baptistery joined the churches in 836; the complex was cleared in the 12th century after a fire rendered the buildings unsafe. Inside the Duomo, buy a ticket for the crypt from the bookshop on your right and head underground to see the star-shaped layout of Bishop Ambrogio's original basilica foundations—discovered when the *Metropolitana* (subway system) was constructed in the 1960s—with displays of early tombs, fragments of mosaic, and glassware. ***30 min. See p 7, bullet 2.***

2 ★★★ kids Basilica di San Lorenzo Maggiore. A 15-minute amble along the major shopping artery of Via Torino and down Corso di Porta Ticinese brings you to 16 Corinthian columns—possibly remnants of ancient baths—outside

The Gothic cathedral in Piazza del Duomo.



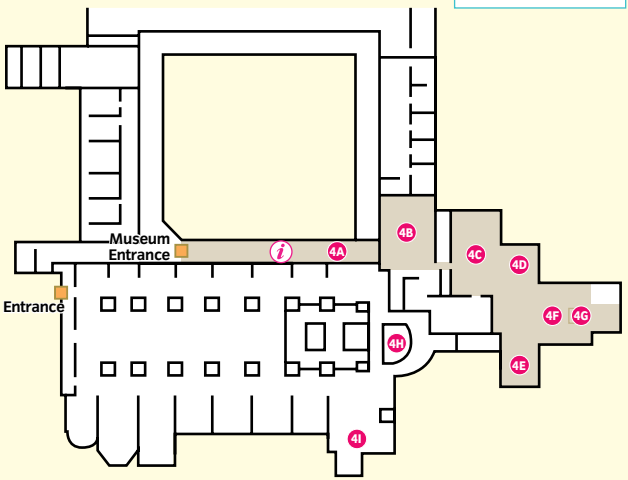
Statue of an angel in the Basilica di San Lorenzo Maggiore.

austere San Lorenzo Maggiore, also known as San Lorenzo alle Colonne. This is one of the most important and oldest religious buildings in Milan. Built in the 4th century from rubble removed from the amphitheater nearby (see p 48, bullet 5), the sober church was largely rebuilt in the 16th century when the original cupola fell down—hence the Renaissance-style arches at the entrance. However, there are original features: the octagonal, white-washed **Cappella di Sant'Aquilino** retains fragments of the 4th-century gold mosaic that would have covered all the walls; just to the right are stairs leading on to foundations of the first basilica. A bronze of Emperor Constantine, who ended the persecution of Christians with the Edict of Milan in 313AD, stands in front of the church. Head round to the Parco delle Basiliche (see p 79, bullet 10) for a wonderful view of the rear of the church and its apse. 🕘 ***30 min. Corso di Porta Ticinese, 40. ☎ 02 89 40 41 29. www.sanlorenzomaggiore.com. Daily 7.30am–12.30pm, 2.30pm–6.45pm. Admission to church free; 2€ chapel, 1€ concession. Metro: Line 2 to Sant'Ambrogio.***

3 ★★ **Yguana Café.** Take a lunchtime break in any of the hip and bohemian bars around trendy Corso di Porto Ticinese, which is full of one-off clothing stores and tattoo parlors. My favorite place, for the view of San Lorenzo Maggiore rather than the decent panini and pizza, is Yguana, tucked two streets behind the church and the haunt of a sleek modeling crew. At night it's popular for aperitivi and gets quite rowdy. ***Via Papa Gregorio XIV, 16, ☎ 02 89 40 41 95. $–$$.***

4 ★★★ **Basilica & Museo di Sant'Eustorgio.** Five minutes walk down Corso di Porta Ticinese, this splendid basilica has a museum of ornate church artifacts and the almost-surreal Cappella Portinari in the chapterhouse. Originally built in the 11th century to house the relics of the Magi, like many Milan churches it has been reworked; the present Neo-Romanesque façade dates from 1865. Don't miss the Renaissance arcading in the piazza to your left.

Basilica & Museo di Sant'Eustorgio



Enter the museum on the left of the basilica's main door. 4A **A Paleo-Christian Cemetery** was discovered under the church in the 1960s. The 4B **Chapterhouse of the Dominican Monastery** and 4C **Sacristy** contain gold and silver reliquaries, tapestries, and crucifixes. Wander through the frescoed 4D **St Paul's Chapel** and 4E **St Francis's Chapel** to the 15th-century 4F **Cappella Portinari**, built by wealthy Florentine banker Pigello Portinari as a memorial to St Peter. The domed roof is painted in acid colors and the walls frescoed by Vincent Foppa (c.1430–c.1515) with scenes from the lives of the Virgin Mary and St Peter. The elaborate **marble** 4G **Arca di San Pietro Martiri** dominating the chapel houses St Peter's remains; it is the masterpiece of Pisan sculptor Giovanni Balduccio (c.1290–1339) and consists of an ark supported by five red marble columns, disguised by statues of the Virtues; spot the two-faced one. The 4H **foundations of the original 4th-century church** are behind the altar in the present basilica, which contains the purported relics of the three wise men in the 4I **Sarcophagus of the Magi**. *1 hr. Piazza Sant'Eustorgio, 3. 02 89 40 26 71. www.santeustorgio.it. Daily 10am–6pm. Admission museum 6€, concessions: students and seniors 3€, children under 14, 1€. 4€ for cameras. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova.*

5 ★ **Museo Diocesano.** Housed in the 16th-century cloisters of Sant'Eustorgio (see bullet 4), this museum attracts only the most dedicated fans of religious art, which has been garnered from churches all over Lombardy. Granted the layout has been

The Forgotten Painting

While Leonardo worked on *The Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie's refectory, Lombard School artist Donato Montorfano (1450–c.1502) was creating his *Crucifixion* on the opposite wall; although these frescoes were both created in the 1490s, the styles could not be more different. Donato's fresco is hopelessly overshadowed by Leonardo's genius. The *Crucifixion* lacks perspective, with the three crosses looming out of the middle of the image and Jerusalem hanging in the background. In contrast to the emotive expressions of Leonardo's disciples, Donato's faces are expressionless. The figures of Ludovico Sforza and his family at the front of the painting were added in tempera by Leonardo, and have deteriorated like *The Last Supper* (see p 16, bullet 5), while the rest of Donato's fresco remains comparatively bright.

radically updated, but I prefer to see my church treasures in situ. The highlight of the collection is the medieval Tuscan *Fondi Oro*, a series of exquisite altar paintings by the likes of Sienese painters Agnolo Gaddi (c.1345–96) and Taddeo di Bartolo (c.1362–1422). 🕘 ***45 min. Corso di Porta Ticinese, 95; opposite Sant'Eustorgio.*** ☎ ***02 89 40 47 14. www.museodiocesano.it. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Admission 6€, concessions: students and seniors 4€, students 1€. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova.***

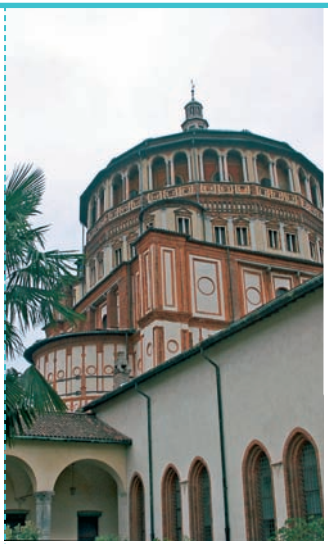
6 ★★★ **Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio.** A 15-minute walk from Sant'Eustorgio, Milan's most sublime example of a Lombard Romanesque church holds the remains of the city's patron saint,

Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio.

Ambrogio. Built over a Roman cemetery, the church was extensively remodeled from the 8th to 11th centuries.

Beyond the perfect symmetry of the atrium lies a cross-vaulted nave with two side aisles; the massive marble pulpit on the left is decorated with a bronze eagle and supported by the sarcophagus of the Roman general Stilicone, who died in 404AD. The glittering 4th- to 8th-century mosaic in the apse and wall frescoes in the side chapels show scenes from the life of Ambrogio, but the interior is dominated by the gold altar commissioned from goldsmith Volvinius in 824 to house Ambrogio remains. To me, this is one of most phenomenal pieces of religious art in Milan, studded with enamels and pearls; you can't get too close because it's protected by glass, but the golden relief work depicts the lives of Christ and Ambrogio. Off the north aisle, you'll find a small museum of church artifacts. *1 hr. Piazza Sant'Ambrogio, 15. 02 86 45 08 95. www.sant ambrogio-basilica.it. Mon–Sat 7.30am–12.30pm, 2.30pm–7pm. Admission free. Metro: Line 2 to Sant'Ambrogio.*

7 ★★★ Santa Maria delle Grazie. Five minutes down Via Carducci and left along Corso Magenta, you discover the delightful Lombard Renaissance church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, often ignored in the scramble to see Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* in the refectory (see p 16, bullet 5). Built 1465–82 by Gothic architect Guiniforte Solari (c.1429–81), the church was later enlarged when the ruling duke Ludovico Sforza decided to make it his family mausoleum. He



Santa Maria delle Grazie.

commissioned da Vinci to paint the famous *The Last Supper*, and Donato Bramante (1444–1514), leading light of the Lombard Renaissance, added the terracotta-and-cream arcaded apse in 1492. Inside, a clash of styles is evident between Solari's heavily frescoed Gothic nave and Bramante's airy, somber apse. Look out for the charmingly named Cloister of the Frogs to the right of the apse, which leads to the sacristy, full of painted wardrobes that once housed the liturgical robes. *1 hr. Piazza Santa Maria delle Grazie, 2. 02 89 42 11 46. www. cenacolovinciano.org. Admission to church free; refectory and* **The Last Supper** *extra, see p 16, bullet 5. Tues–Sun 7am–12pm, 3–7pm. 5 min from Sant'Ambrogio. Metro: Lines 1 and 2 to Cadorna.*

Milan with Kids

I find Milan a relatively child-friendly city: despite the chaotic traffic, the center is pedestrianized, and the public transport system is easy to use. Like all Italians, the Milanese adore children. Get accustomed to your toddlers being hugged and exclaimed over in restaurants, where you can always expect a child's portion of pasta and tomato sauce to be whisked up. There are a couple of museums that appeal to kids and plenty to do outdoors. **START: Metro Lines 1 or 3 to Cadorna.**

1 ★★★ kids Parco Sempione. Milan's biggest park has the feel of a London park, with English-style landscaping; there's a boating lake in the middle, where Milanese kids go to float their toy boats. If you're traveling with toddlers, you'll find a small playground with roundabouts and slides on the north side of the park. An electric train makes a short circular journey from here and a minute go-kart track amuses budding Lewis Hamiltons.

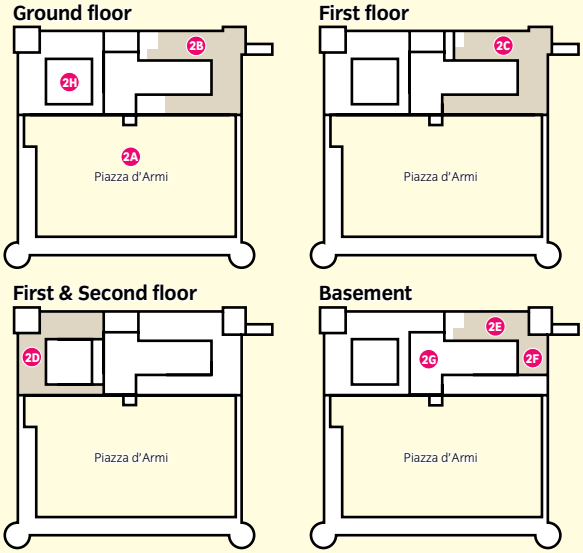
Older kids will want to make the trip to the top of Torre Branca (see p 77, bullet 1) either to spot the Duomo over the rooftops or for the cool factor of riding in an elevator on the outside of a building. In an idea blatantly stolen from Paris-Plage, summer in the park sees a man-made beach appearing when 600 tonnes of sand are dumped over 250,000 square meters of lawn. Out come the deckchairs, the beach towels, and the sun cream as people flock to play racket ball, ping pong, and volleyball among the planted palm trees. There's a paddling pool and a nursery too. 🕘 *2 hr. See p 14, bullet 4.*

2 ★★ kids Castello Sforzesco. The massive castle home of the

Castello Sforzesco.

Sforza family began life in 1368 as the fortress of the Visconti dukes, then rulers of Milan. Surrounded by impregnable walls, the castle has had a turbulent history (see box, Building Castello Sforzesco, p 38) but is now home to seven diverse museums arranged around two huge central piazzas.

Castello Sforzesco



Enter through the great arch off the 2A **Piazza d'Armi.** Not all exhibits will appeal to children, but the chances are they'll love Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pietà* in the 2B **Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Antica**, a select few of the vast, dramatic oils in the 2C **Pinacoteca**, Mozart's spinet and the Stradivarius violins in the 2D **Museo degli Strumenti Musicali**, and the mummies and 25th-dynasty sarcophagi in the 2E **Museo Egizio** (Egyptian Museum), accessed via the rather disappointing 2F **Museo della Preistoria**, on the right-hand side of the 2G **Cortile Ducale**. The sheer enormity of the place and its maze of internal passages, the views over the elegant Renaissance 2H **Cortile della Roccheta** will impress everyone. 🕘 *2 hr. Piazza Castello, 3.* ☎ *02 88 46 37 00. www.milanocastello.it. Admission to Castello free; museums 3€ adults, concessions 1.50€, under 18s free. Tues–Sun 9am–5.30pm (free Fri afternoon and after 4.30pm Tues–Thurs). Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. See also p 37, bullet* 1.

Treats for all Ages

There is a swimming pool at Parco Solari (see p 80, bullet 11); Aquatica (see p 108) has flumes and water slides for a day's family fun away from the sights. Idropark Fila (see p 108) at Linate opens from late May through to September, with every sporting activity under the sun to occupy the kids.

A visit to the **Duomo roof** (see p 9, bullet 5) engages youngsters eager to spot the Alps in the distance. Watching people dancing on the private parts of the mosaic bull in **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II** (see p 8, bullet 3) will always raise a smile.

A visit to see AC or Inter Milan play at **San Siro** is a dream for most boys and their dads; if you can't get tickets for a match (see p 107), the museum showcases the history of the rival teams and there are guided tours of the stadium. If you do go to a game, bear in mind that the intense rivalry sometimes spills over into violence, with extreme right-wingers often causing trouble at matches.

3 ★★ kids **Piazza Castello kiosk.** Stop off at the kiosk near the fountain in the piazza outside Castello Sforzesco and try a fruity granita (frozen ice flavored with fruit cordials). The exotic melon is delicious; if that doesn't appeal, buy an enormous cone of Italian vanilla ice cream. *$.*

4 ★★ kids **Acquario (Aquarium).** A short walk from Castello Sforzesco and still in Parco Sempione, Italy's largest aquarium is housed in an ornate mansion dating from 1906 and has recently been revamped to concentrate on Italian fish life, exhibited in a series of ecosystems working down from the Alpine lakes through mountain streams and to the sea. It's not enormous, but the 20 or so indoor tanks are laid out in a circular format, clearly labeled in English, and full of striking fish darting among rocks and past anemones. My favorite sight was an eel with a skin patterned like a Louis Vuitton bag; quite apt for Milan I thought. Outside there is a terrarium filled with well-camouflaged terrapins; take some mosquito repellent if you visit in summer. *45 min. Viale*

Anemone among the rocks at the Acquario.

Night at the Museum

The reborn Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia **Leonardo da Vinci** (see p 49, bullet 7) has a full program of activities and exhibits to make science attractive to children—and that can't be bad. Along with interactive exhibits, workshops, and group activities centering on science and future technology, actors in the role of famous scientific innovators lead daily tours around the museum. There are even special night-time experiences, when kids accompanied by an adult become involved in story-telling and role-playing while spending a night in the museum. All require pre-booking.

Gadio, 2, Parco Sempione. ☎ 02 88 46 57 50. Admission free. Tues–Sun 9am–1pm, 2pm–5.30pm. 5-min walk across Parco Sempione. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera.

5 ★★★ kids **Street Theater.** Make the walk through the enticing streets of Brera, where kids will be enchanted by the street theater. Most days you'll see some sort of entertainment around this pedestrianized area, be it mime artists, jugglers, or musicians. 🕘 *20 min.*

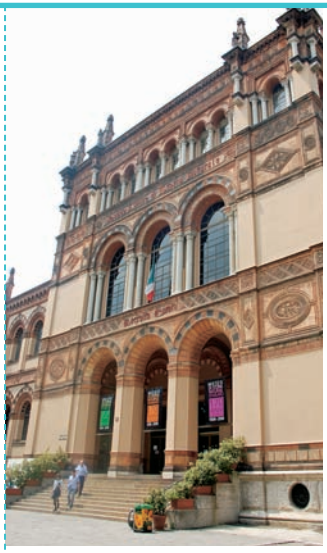
6 ★★★ kids **Nabucco.** There are plenty of Brera cafés to recommend, but Nabucco is particularly child-friendly and will serve mini portions of most pasta and pizza dishes. See also p 88. *Via Fiori Chiari, 10. ☎ 02 86 06 63. $$$.*

7 ★★★ kids **Giardini Pubblici.** Milan's second-largest public space was opened in 1786 and like Parco Sempione (see bullet 1) the gardens

Roundabout in the Giardini Pubblici.

designed by Giuseppe Piermarini (1734–1808) are laid out in the English Romantic style popular at the time. Also like Parco Sempione, most days the gardens are full of dog walkers, and at weekends families crowd in to play with their children and enjoy the sun. Toddlers can have a ball here; pony-and-trap rides start from the lake—you'll see a red desk—and nearby there is a junior roundabout and a little electric train that trundles around a short track. 🕘 *2 hr. Via Palestro. Admission free. Daily 6.30am–sunset. Metro: Line 1 to Palestra. See p 78, bullet 7.*

8 ★ kids Museo di Storia Naturale (Natural History Museum). At the Corso Venezia side of the Giardini Pubblici (see bullet 7), and contained within the park, the natural history museum is a hotchpotch of collections, although the main focus is on nature, evolution, and environment. The labeling is fairly random, with some sections clearly captioned in English but the majority not. On two vast floors, the museum kicks off with a fascinating collection of minerals and fossils, and then leads to a cavernous hall where dinosaur skeletons hang from the ceiling—always guaranteed to get kids excited. Skip through the tame History of Man section and onto the bugs, where kids can enjoy the specimens of poisonous spider. Upstairs a series of old-fashioned dioramas feature reconstructions of eco-structures, which are filled with stuffed animals. There's so much to see that concentration will lapse, and so round off your visit at the museum shop selling natural history books, animal-orientated games, and stuffed toys. 🕘 *1½ hr. Corso Venezia, 55.* ☎ *02 88 46 33 37. www.comune.milan.it/museostorianaturale. Admission 3€, concessions 1.50€. Tues–Sun 9am–5.30pm. Book guided tours in advance on* ☎ *02 88 46 32 93. 5-min walk across the Giardini Pubblici. Metro: Line 1 to Porta Venezia.*



Natural History Museum.

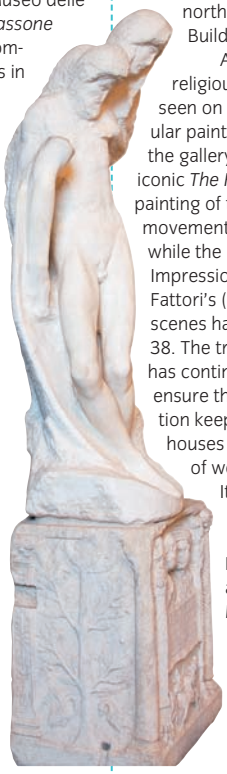
9 ★ kids Planetario 'Ulrico Hoepoli'. Opened in 1930 and right next door to the natural history museum, Milan's planetarium is largely used for research purposes but is also open for twice-weekly lectures on the night sky (in Italian only). Weekends see two shows in the afternoon; any child interested in astronomy should be able to follow the accessible presentations in the 20m (66ft) cupola. 🕘 *1½ hr. Corso Venezia, 57.* ☎ *02 88 46 33 40. Admission 3€, concessions 1.50€. Shows: Tues and Thurs 9pm; Sat and Sun 3pm, 4.30pm. Metro: Line 1 to Porta Venezia.*

Milan's Art Treasures

The ever-changing political leaders of Milan were always determined to leave their mark on the city. They used their great wealth to build magnificent landmarks, forge priceless art collections, and patronize the brightest artistic talents of their day. The tradition continues to this day, with donations from wealthy patrons adding continually to the legacy of treasures on display in Milan's galleries and museums. **START: Metro Line 1 to Cairoli.**

1 ★★ Castello Sforzesco.

There's too much to see in the fortress's seven museums in one go. Today, on the Art Treasures tour, I recommend heading for Leonardo's frescoed Sala delle Asse on the ground floor, and Michelangelo's unfinished *Rondanini Pietà* in the Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Antica in the Sala degli Scarlioni. On Floor 1; the stand-out piece of the Museo delle Arte Decorative is the *Cassone del Tre Duchi*, a chest commissioned by the Sforzas in 1494, decorated with images of the dukes in full military regalia. From here, continue into the Castello's Pinacoteca, showcasing religious art from the Renaissance years, with works by Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini (c.1430–1516) and Bramantino (c.1460–1530). My personal favorites are two ghostly works by Spanish Mannerist artists: Jusepe de Ribera's (1591–1652), *Holy Hermit* and Sebastian Ricci's (1659–1734) *Temptation of St Anthony*. The exquisite Trivulzio Tapestries by Bramantino in the Sala della Balla are the main attractions of the applied art galleries.



Michelangelo's unfinished Rondanini Pietà.

Leave the Prehistoric and Egyptian collections for another day. 🕘 *2 hr.* *See p 31, bullet 2.*

2 ★★★ Pinacoteca di Brera.

Leave Castello Sforzesco under the magnificent Filarete Tower and walk 15 minutes to Brera's Pinacoteca, with its fabulous collection of religious art, in some cases snaffled by Napoleon from churches all over northern Italy (see box, Building the Brera, p 14). Along with the great religious works you may have seen on Day One, there are secular paintings towards the end of the gallery; Francesco Hayez's iconic *The Kiss* (1859) is a leading painting of the Italian Romantic movement and found in Room 37, while the Macchiaioli (Italian Impressionism) artist Giovanni Fattori's (1825–1908) rural scenes hang next door in Room 38. The tradition of patronage has continued down the ages to ensure the Pinacoteca's collection keeps growing; Room 10 houses an unsurpassed series of works by 20th-century Italian artists including Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916), and sculptor Marino Marini (1901–80),

Building Castello Sforzesco

The massive castle dominating Parco Sempione is central to Milan's history. Originally owned by the Visconti family, it was commandeered by the wealthy Sforza dynasty after the brief Ambrosian Republic fell in 1450. They modified and extended the castle until it became one of the most gracious palaces of the Italian Renaissance, arranged around three courtyards, protected by fortified walls and watchtowers, and surrounded by the hunting grounds that created today's Parco Sempione (see p 14, bullet 4). When the Sforzas lost power in 1499, the castle fell into disrepair for several centuries and was only rescued from demolition by architect Luca Beltrami (1854–1933), who undertook the renovation in 1893. Eleven years later the castle opened to the public as the civic museum we know today (see p 37, bullet 1).

donated to the museum by the Jesi family in the 1970s. 🕘 *1 hr. See p 13, bullet 1.*

3 ★ **Museo del Risorgimento.** Step around the corner to learn more about Napoleon's rule and subsequent overthrow in Italy (1796–1815) through documents, paintings, and weapons detailing political events leading up to the Unification of Italy in 1861. The museum is housed appropriately enough in the Ministry of War; the elegant neoclassical Palazzo Moriggia, built by Giuseppe Piermarini in 1775 and eventually donated to the city in 1951 by the aristocratic De Marchi dynasty. 🕘 *30 min. Via Borgonuovo, 23.* ☎ *02 88 46 41 77. www.museodelrisorgimento.mi.it. Admission: 2€, concessions 1€. Tues–Sun 9am–1pm. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera or Line 3 to Montenapoleone.*

The Kiss, *1859 (oil on canvas), Francesco Hayez.*

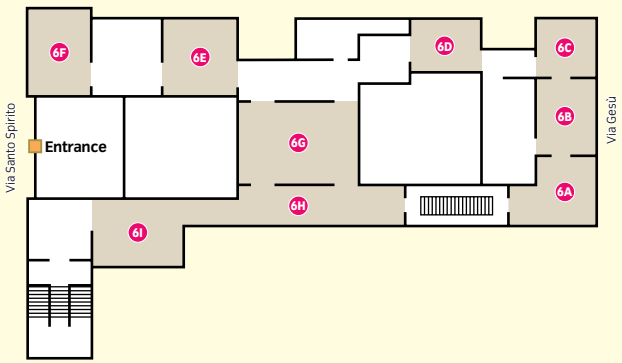
4 **Bar Bianco.** Depending on what time of day you get here (remember the Museo del Risorgimento only opens in the morning), buy an ice cream from Il Chioso di Pippa near the Via Moscova entrance to the park or pop into Bar Bianco for salad or pasta at lunchtime. *Giardini Pubblici.* ☎ *02 29 52 33 54. $.*

Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte.

5 ★ Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte. Opposite the Giardini Pubblici and built for Count Ludovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso in 1790, this neoclassical villa was the home of Napoleon and his mistress Josephine in 1802 when he ruled over Milan. Hated Austrian general Field Marshall Radetzky, regarded as oppressor of the Milanese, also lived here in the 1840s. It now houses Milan's 19th-century art collections, ranging from works by Italian Romantic artist Francesco Hayez, to the works of the Macchiaioli School artists Giovanni Fattori and Silvestro Lega (1826–95). In the Milanese tradition, two wealthy families have given French Impressionist and Expressionist paintings to the gallery, but to my taste the most interesting work was donated by revered Italian sculptor Marino Marini (1901–80). In 1973, he handed over a number of his own Etruscan-influenced works in a collection that rivals his retrospective museum in Florence. *45 min. Via Palestro, 16. 02 76 00 28 19. www.villabelgiojosobonaparte.it. Admission free. Tues–Sun 9am–1pm, 2–5.30pm. 5-min walk from Museo del Risorgimento. Metro: Line 1 to Palestro.*

6 ★★ Museo Bagatti Valsecchi. Housed in a delightfully opulent 19th-century Renaissance-style palazzo,10 minutes from Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte, this museum represents the life work of aristocratic brothers Giuseppe and Fausto Bagatti Valsecchi, who spent the years 1876–95 renovating two derelict mansions in the Quad d'Oro. In 1974, the Fondazione Bagatti Valsecchi opened the museum after it was lovingly refurbished using photographic reference.

Museo Bagatti Valsecchi



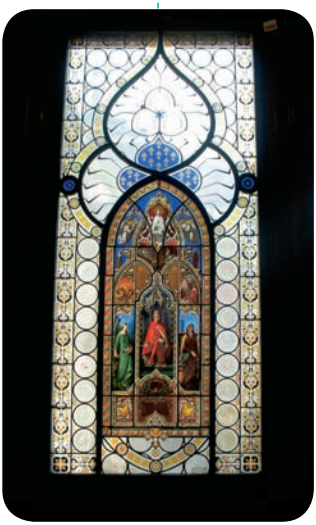
The vaulted blue-ceilinged 6A **Fresco Room**, used as the family's private dining area, kicks off the series of rooms, including public apartments for entertaining, luxurious private suites, and picture galleries decked out in 15th- and 16th-century art treasures and convincing mock-Renaissance style 19th-century repro furniture. Ignore the silent security guards in every room and concentrate on enjoying the elaborate Madonna and Child wall hangings in 6B **the Bevilacqua Room**, the gold skull on the bishop's chair in 6C **Fausto's Bedroom**, and the whimsical frog carved into the shower tray in 6D **Fausto's Bathroom**. The 6E **Valtellinese Stove Room** was the family's living room; it has intricately carved wooden friezes covering the walls and ceiling, with stoves offering primitive central heating. Bright-red wallpaper cheers the carved wooden four-poster in 6F **Giuseppe's bedroom**—he made a fortuitous marriage to Carolina, from the equally wealthy Borromeo family. The public rooms include the marble-floored 6G **Drawing Room**, 6H **Gallery of Arms**, and 6I **Dining Room**; because they were used for impressing business clients they drip with ostentatious Renaissance glassware, cutlery, and family portraits. *1 hr. Via Santo Spirito, 10, Via Gesù, 5. ☎ 02 76 00 61 32. www.museobagattivalsecchi.org. Admission: 8€, concession 4€, under 14s free. Tues–Sun 1–5.45pm. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone.*

Milan's Movers & Shakers

Milan found prosperity under the Lombard League in 1167, and was later ruled by the ducal Visconti family until 1447. They designed buildings including the Castello Sforzesco (see p 37, bullet 1). Three years later, the brief Ambrosian Republic fell to Sforzas, who enlarged the castle and brought Leonardo da Vinci (see p 49) to Milan. The Habsburgs saw the city prosper from 1525 to 1714, with the Borromeo family leading the Counter-Reformation. Marie-Theresa of Austria opened the Pinacoteca di Brera (see p 37, bullet 2) in 1776, with Napoleon adding to the collection while he lived at the Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte (see p 39, bullet 5) in 1802. Wealthy 19th- and 20th-century patrons donated to the artistic wealth of the city, including the Bagatti Valsecchis (see p 39, bullet 6).

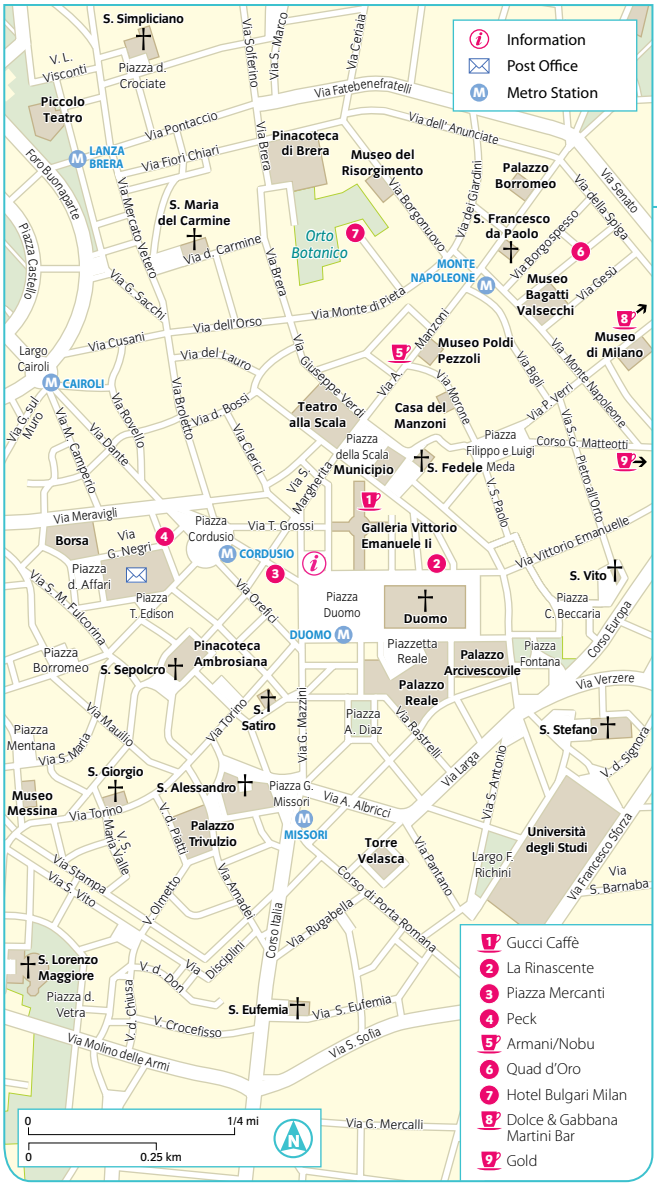
7 ★★★ Museo Poldi Pezzoli. From the Bagatti Valsecchi, it's a 10-minute walk through the Quad d'Oro to the day's final stop. You may have visited the museum on Day One (see p 10, bullet 8) and you can find more information about the works within the building on that day. Today, we concentrate on one of the world's most important collections of timepieces.

Turn right at the top of the sweeping stairs in Poldi Pezzoli's elaborate 17th-century palazzo for the priceless collection of watches and carriage clocks donated to the museum by wealthy Italian stockbroker Bruno Falck in 1973. Chief among these is the delicate Armillary Sphere, crafted from a series of metallic rings and made by Flemish clockmaker Gualterus Arsenius (d.1580) in 1568 to demonstrate celestial movement. Look out for the series of intriguing sundials, including an ivory one in the shape of a ship, which were given to the museum in 1978 from the estate of architect Piero Portoluppi (1888–1977). 🕘 *1½ hr. See p 10, bullet 8.*



Stained glass window, Museo Poldi Pezzoli.

Food & Fashion



Italians are slaves to their stomachs and their *bella figura.* In Milan, food and fashion assume a quasi-religious importance, with great care taken over the buying and preparing of meals, and dressing modishly taken very seriously. Combine that with an Italian penchant for style and it's small wonder that a new kind of establishment has sprung up; almost every fashion designer worth his or her salt has opened a branded bar or restaurant in this capital of cool. Here's where you go to get fed and watered and stay on trend.

START: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo.

1 ★★ **Gucci Caffè.** I'm powerless to walk into the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (see p 8, bullet 3) without veering into Gucci for a look at their heavily branded (and expensive) bags, belts, and shoes. Now I can enjoy the sight of pipe-cleaner-thin fashionistas perusing the goods while sitting on the terrace in front of the shop and indulging in a mid-morning Marocchino or passion fruit spremuata (fruit juice)—not a snip at 8€ but probably the only article us mere mortals can afford from Gucci. 🕘 *30 min. Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.* ☎ *02 85 97 99 32. www.gucci.com. Closed Mon. $$.*

2 ★★★ **La Rinascente.** Turn left into Piazza del Duomo and stop off on the mezzanine floor of Milan's premier department store for a forage among the designer concessions: Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Christian Dior, and Bottega Veneta are all here, and somehow the shop is less intimidating than the main branches in the Quad d'Oro, although the prices are no cheaper. When you've had enough of logo bags and belts, make your way up to the seventh floor for the sublime food department, which sells minimally packaged foodstuffs, from fagioli beans to organic preserves. There's also a chocolate bar and bakery selling brioches straight from the oven. Oh, and great views of the Duomo a stone's throw away (see p 7, bullet 2). 🕘 *40 min. See p 67 for details. 5-min walk from Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.*

Minimally packaged products in the food department of La Rinascente.

3 ★★★ **Piazza Mercanti.** Cross Piazza del Duomo and walk up Via Orefici to Piazza Mercanti, an ancient, arcaded square dating from the 13th century, and often the scene of an organic food market selling everything from venison salami to olive oils flavored with chili. Even if there's nothing on, this is an atmospheric medieval piazza edged with the baroque Palazzo

delle Scuole Palatine, which was designed by Carlo Buzzi (d.1658) in 1645, where teenagers gather to chat and smoke on the steps. 🕘 ***30 min. if there is a market. Piazza Mercanti. 5-min walk up from Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.***

4 ★★★ **Peck.** If you haven't already visited for picnic goodies (see p 71), this smart food emporium is the place to buy comestibles for taking home as gifts. 🕘 ***45 min. See p 71 for details.***

5 ★★ **Armani/Nobu.** A 20-minute walk from Peck up Via Santa Margarita and Via Manzoni brings you to Nobu. Serving great fusion Japanese-South American sushi and sashimi cooked up by renowned chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa, it is relatively cheap to eat in the bar here, where a fixed-price Bento box provides ten pieces of sushi (fish, meat, and veggie options); on offer for 25€ (at the time of writing). It's a chance to feel glamorous at this wood-and-glass bar and enjoy the sharp design of Giorgio Armani's wildly successful multi-level store (see p 69). If you don't fancy sushi, pop in to the ground-level bar for a wicked lunchtime Campari. ***Via Pisoni, 1. ☎ 02 72 31 86 45. www.armaninobu.com. Lunch Tues–Sat; dinner daily. $$$.***

6 ★★★ **Quad d'Oro.** From Nobu it's all too easy to step across Via Manzoni straight into Via Montenap (as the locals call it) and let your credit cards do the walking. If budgets don't permit a blow out, you'll have fun watching all the self-conscious stylists stalking the streets. You'll soon see that less is more; nobody looks more chic than a Milanese woman in a pair of well-fitting jeans (Versace of course) and a simple white shirt. When it comes to

Smart food emporium Peck.

Quad d'Oro for designer shopping.

late-afternoon coffee time, choose from traditional Cova (see p 87) or Sant'Ambroeus (see p 90), or get designer again and head for Just Cavalli Café in Spazio (Via Spiga, 30, ☎ 02 76 31 65 66), sister of the impossibly hip bar in Parco Sempione (see p 14, bullet 4) and the result of another successful tie up between food and fashion gurus. The three-level extravaganza has a mirrored dining room, gigantic aquarium, and strange white pods that serve as seating in the bar. 🕘 *1½ hr with window shopping and coffee. Across the road from Nobu, down Via Montenapoleone and left down Via Gesù. See p 10, bullet 6.*

7 ★★★ Hotel Bulgari Milan. It's early evening now and so it must be time for more food and drink. From the Quad d'Oro you have a choice of sanctified fashionable venues for pre-dinner nibbles. Tranquil Hotel Bulgari Milan, styled in teak and marble and with its rarified gardens, is a hop back across Via Manzoni. 🕘 *1½ hr. See p 116 for details.*

8 ★★ Dolce & Gabbana Martini Bar. The glamorous Dolce & Gabbana Martini Bar is minutes away southeast of the Quad d'Oro. Here you can knock back a Martini at the circular black-lacquered bar under a huge red Murano glass chandelier and be served by waiters with designer stubble. Remember, if you want to fit in, don't gobble your prosciutto and olives. Graze delicately on your snacks. *Corso Venezia, 15. ☎ 02 76 01 11 54. Open Mon–Sat 10am–9:30pm. $$$.*

9 Gold. To continue your designer day, visit D&G's other foodie venture, Gold, a 20-minute walk away past Porta Monforte. Breakfast of croissants, coffee, and cake is served in the gleaming bar downstairs and lunch in the bistro on white leather divans. Upstairs thousands of gold pea lights glitter in the white, gray, and gold restaurant, which serves a quality Italian menu using largely organic ingredients; to cater for the model clientele, a lighter, fat-free menu has been created to prevent any carbohydrates inadvertently being ingested. *Via Carlo Poeri, 2a. ☎ 02 75 77 771. www.dolcegabbanagold.com. Open lunch and dinner daily. $$$$.*

Milan: Ancient & Modern

Today's a day to sample local life along the carefree Navigli, explore Roman ruins and state-of-the-art museums, and maybe do some shopping along the major artery of Corso Magenta. Plan this walk to coincide with the pulsating street market at Viale Papiniano on Monday, Thursday, or Friday, or on the third Sunday of the month, when the antiques market hits Navigli. If not, there's still plenty to do and see along the way. **START: Metro Line 2 to Porta Genova.**

Market stall, Viale Papiniano.

1 ★★ Santa Maria delle Grazie al Naviglio. Drink in the daytime ambience of the carefree Navigli district (see p 17, bullet 6), where goods and produce were brought into Milan from medieval times until World War II, making the city an important port, despite its situation well inland. The canals were started in 1177, and the network once stretched 150km into the hinterland; in the 14th century barges transported marble for the Duomo into the city. The Sforza Duke Ludovico Il Moro commissioned Leonardo da Vinci to improve the waterways, which formed a vital trading link until the 1930s, when large areas were filled in. My secret find, the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie al Navigli, stands on Naviglio Grande. It doesn't look much from the outside (it's covered in graffiti), but is outstandingly beautiful inside. Consecrated in 1500, it has a central nave and two aisles, decorated with pale marble and vaulted arches laced with pink-tinged baroque carvings of angels. 🕘 *30 min. Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 34.* ☎ *02 83 72 887. www.parrocchie.it/milano/santamariadellegraziealnaviglio. Admission free. Daily 7.30am–12pm, 3–7pm. 10 min from Metro.*

2 ★★★ Mercatone del Naviglio. This informal weekend market sprawls along both the Grande and Pavese canals and crams so many people into the narrow streets that sometimes it is impossible to move.

The amphitheater ruins.

Even if you miss this bargain-fest, chances are there will be stalls selling ethnic crafts and sub-designer gear at the top of Naviglio Grande by Darsena, the former dockyard, plus the delights of the local Mercato Comunale in Piazzale XXIV Maggio. 🕘 ***30 min.***

3 ★★★ Viale Papiniano. On Monday, Thursday, and Saturday turn left at Darsena and immerse yourself in the chaotic stalls along Viale Papiniano. This is the place for garish sarongs, pretty flip flops, and spices by the bucketload. 🕘 ***20 min.***

4 ★ Antica Porta Ticinese. Cut up Corso di Porta Ticinese to the Antica Porta Ticinese, a great arched 12th-century gate on a busy junction. In medieval times this was the entry point to the city from Pavia, which lies south of Milan. 🕘 ***5 min. 5-min walk from Darsena.***

5 ★★ Antiquario Alda Levi & Anfiteatro Romano. Head along Via de Amicis and five minutes up the road on the left lies the amphitheater complex, entered through a small museum. Ignore the guides at the entrance; they're only after a gratuity and the ruins are explained in English. The museum has been spruced up with lottery money and contains fragments of mosaic floor, combs, medals, and lamps from this area of the western city center, which is rich in Roman remains. There's also the tombstone (*stele*) of a gladiator called Urbicus, dating from the third century, when the Roman Empire was at its peak in Milan—the inscription finishes: 'His fans will keep him alive'. A short film on the excavation of the amphitheater is only in Italian.

Outside, much of the amphitheater has been built over; what is exposed dates from the 1st century AD and consists of the perimeter and central walls, as well as stone ribs that supported the spectator's seats. It's estimated that the arena measured 150 by 125 meters (164 by 136 yards). Stone from the site was used to build San Lorenzo Maggiore (see p 25, bullet 2). 🕘 ***45 min. Via de Amicis, 17.*** ☎ ***02 89 40 05 55. Admission free. Antiquario Alda Levi: Thurs–Sat 9am–2pm.***

Anfiteatro: Tues–Sat 9am–4.30pm (winter); 9am–7pm (summer).

6 ★★ **Caffè Carducci.** Time for a restorative birra or coffee. Try this traditional café right opposite the church of Sant'Ambrogio for coffee and pastries standing at the bar. *Via Carducci, 1. ☎ 02 89 00 440. Closed Sun. $$.*

7 ★★★ kids **Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci.** Closed for several years for a mammoth refit (surprisingly, given that this is Italy, opening on time in September 2008), this sparkly, revamped museum is a rarity in Milan: a truly family-friendly venue with activities that will entrance and tax brains of all ages. It's divided into six sections with a remit to make learning fun, inspired by the drawings and models of the original Renaissance man Leonardo da Vinci, who spent 17 years in Milan working for the Sforza family. His designs can be seen in the Leonardo Gallery. Interactive exhibits cover the areas of energy, communications, biotechnology, plastics, and transport. Kids will love learning how steam engines work but you need to book for the guided tours of the post-war submarine. I recommend that you also book in advance for group activities and experiments in the Laboratories (see box, Night at the Museum, p 34). 🕘 *2 hr. Via Vittore, 21. ☎ 02 48 55 51. www.museoscienza.org. Admission 8€, concessions 6€. Tues–Fri 9.30am–5pm; Sat–Sun 9.30am–6.30pm. 10 min from Anfiteatro.*

8 ★★★ **Museo Archeologico di Milano.** If you haven't spent too long with Leonardo in the Museo della Scienza, make your way up Via de Togni opposite and turn right on to Corso Magenta for Milan's well-thought out archaeology museum. In bright galleries on two stories, it is subdivided into five categories: Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Barbarian, all with artifacts found in and around Milan, and Eastern. All exhibits are clearly labeled in

Mosaic, Museo Archeologico di Milano.

Serendepico.

English, and background information on life in Mediolanum (the Roman name for Milan) is posted all around the galleries. Anyone with even a tenuous interest in ancient history will be fascinated by the 1st-century BC mosaic pavement, discovered nearby in 1913. In fact, the museum is built into the remains of the 4th-century Roman walls that fortified the city—a section is screened off in the basement. My favorite exhibits include the glorious transparent 4th-century Trivulzio Diattreta Cup, made out of a single piece of fine glass, and the busts of various emperors from Caesar onwards. At the back of the museum in the pretty courtyard, there are further ruins of a patrician villa. 🕘 *1 hr. Corso Magenta, 15.* ☎ *02 86 45 00 11. www.comune.milano.it. Admission 2€. Tues–Sun 9am–1pm, 2–5.30pm. 10 min from Museo della Scienza.*

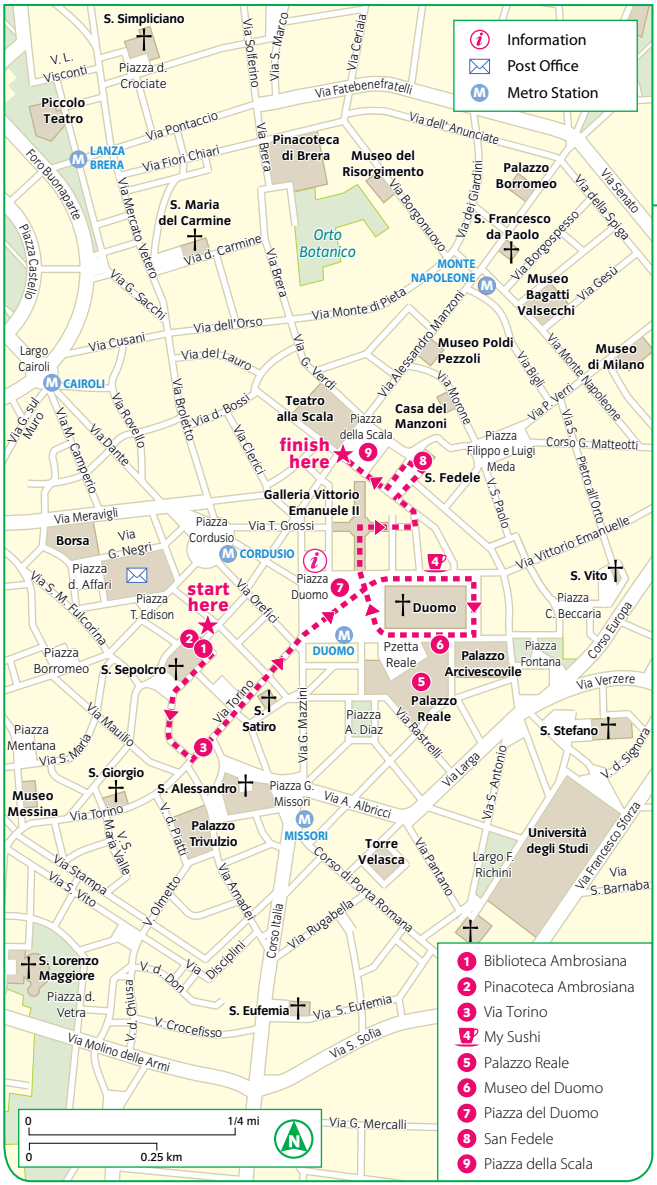
9 ★★ **Serendepico.** It's definitely time for an *aperitivo* now. Walk straight up the Via San Giovanni sul Muro to Foro Bonaparte and stop in at trendy Serendepico (see p 90) *$–$$.*

Have You Seen These?

Four of Milan's most exceptional churches are in the area, so make a detour off this walk if you haven't already seen the following: the exquisite funerary Cappella Portinari in Sant'Eustorgio (see p 26, bullet 4), on the right as you walk up Corso di Porta Ticinese; the Roman columns outside San Lorenzo Maggiore (also called San Lorenzo alle Colonne, see p 25, bullet 2), a step further up the same avenue; the tranquil symmetry and priceless golden altar in Sant'Ambrogio (see p 28, bullet 6), across the road from the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci (see p 49, bullet 7); and the Lombard Romanesque cloisters and Cenacolo (Refectory) containing Leonardo's *The Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie (see p 16, bullet 5), just off Corso Magenta.

3 The Best Neighborhood Walks

Around the Centro Storico



Spend the day exploring Milan's historic heart, which centers on the magnificent Duomo and its enormous cobbled piazza, encompassing Teatro La Scala to the north and Via Torino to the south. You'll also visit Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Palazzo Reale, some of Milan's most reasonable shopping, and traditional ***caffès*** in which to settle back and watch the fashionable crowds float past. Best of all, much of it is pedestrianized, and so you can potter at your leisure. **START: Metro: Line 1 to Cordusion or Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo Five-min walk from either Metro.**

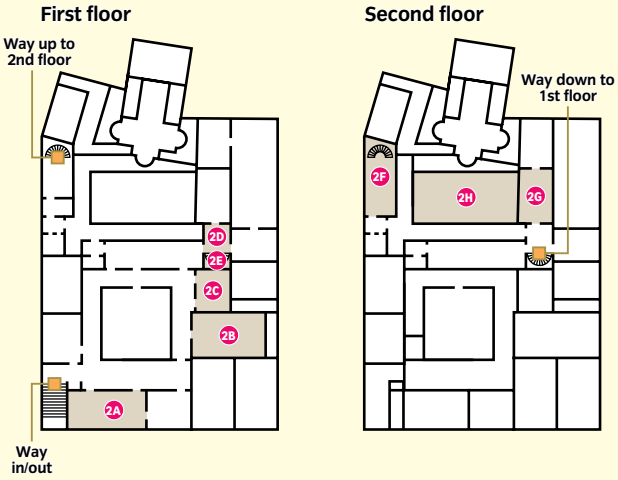
1 ★★ Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Around the corner to the **Pinacoteca** in the same complex, and sadly no longer open to the hoi polloi, this library is one of the oldest in Italy and warrants a mention because it contains over 750,000 rare volumes. Literary treasures include Petrarch's annotated copy of Virgil's *Ilias Picta*, manuscripts by Machiavelli, and most importantly, the original *Codex Atlanticus* finished by Da Vinci in 1519; a sort of early *Encyclopedia Britannica*. If you wish to study here, apply in writing with an introductory letter from your college. ***Piazza Pio XI, 2.***

☎ *02 806 921. www.ambrosiana.it. Entry strictly limited to academics. Mon–Fri 9.30am–5pm.*

2 ★★ Pinacoteca Ambrosiana. Housed in a palazzo designed by architect Fabio Mangone (1587–1629) in 1661 (he also designed part of the Duomo, see p 7, bullet 2) and laid out on three floors, this collection was the brainchild of Cardinal Federico Borromeo (1564–1631, see p 148). Despite the lack of English signs and a confusing layout, the quality of the artwork makes this one of my top spots to visit, with many big name Renaissance artists being hung here.

Statue outside the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

Pinacoteca Ambrosiana



The gallery covers the art of the 15th to early 20th centuries, mostly Italian but also including some Dutch works. The first big gun comes in 2A **Room 2**, the fine portrait of *The Musician* by Leonardo da Vinci, alongside Botticelli's Madonna del Padglione. 2B **Room 5** heralds the cartoon for *The School of Athens* by Raphael (1483–1520), on its own in sepulchral gloom, while Caravaggio's sublime *Basket with Fruit*, painted around 1596, is in 2C **Room 7**—both of these are part of the original Borromeo collection. On your way around, admire the 2D **mosaic floors** and the 2E **kitsch pastoral fresco** adorning the staircase on the second floor. Look out for bleak Dutch winter landscapes by Hendrik Avercamp (1585–1663) in 2F **Room 13**, plus sculpture by neoclassicists Antonio Canova (1757–1822) and Danish Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), exhibited alongside an exceptional

Basket with Fruit, *c.1596 (oil on canvas), Caravaggio.*

collection of gilt figures in the 2G **De Pecis Collection**, donated in 1827. On the third floor, look out over the 2H **inner courtyard** to see statues of famous Milanese and the diverse styles of architecture; the brick semicircle signals the back of San Sepolcro, now part of the complex. 🕘 *1 hr. Piazza Pio XI, 2.* ☎ *02 806 921. www.ambrosiana.it. Admission 8€, concessions 5€. Tues–Sun 10am–5.30pm.*

Milan's Favorite Lady

One of the most potent symbols of Milan is to be found atop the Duomo (see p 9, bullet 5). Look up from anywhere within the Piazza del Duomo and you'll see her; a 4m (13ft) gilded statue of the Virgin Mary, soaring 110m (361ft) above the ground among the 52 spires on the cathedral roof. Known as ***La Madonnina***, she looks even better at night, bathed in the warm glow of floodlights from below. Designed by Giuseppe Perego and fashioned in golden copper by Giuseppe Bini, Madonnina was placed on her precarious perch in 1774; from here she bestows her benefaction over the whole city.

3 ★★ **Via Torino.** From Pinacoteca Ambrosiano, head down to Via Torino, one of Milan's more moderately priced, and therefore busiest, shopping streets (see p 72) to browse chain stores Zara, H&M, Mango, Footlocker, The Body Shop, and Accessorize. 🕘 ***45 min. Via Torino.***

4 ★★★ **My Sushi.** To make a change from pasta, walk across Piazza del Duomo to grab a bite to eat. Try the delicate morsels at the counter of My Sushi, in La Rinascente's (see p 67) stylish seventh-floor food hall. You can also order a box of sushi to take out. ***Piazza del Duomo, 7.*** ☎ ***02 88 52 456. $$.***

5 ★★ **Palazzo Reale.** Re-cross Piazza del Duomo in front of the cathedral to see what's on offer at the Palazzo Reale. Originally built in the 11th century and variously the seat of administrative power, the palace of the Visconti family (see p 41), and a theater, the building was destroyed by fire in 1776. It was rebuilt by Giuseppe Piermarini (1734–1808), architect of La Scala opera house (see p 106), and became the neoclassical home of the ruling Austrian Habsburg archdukes. After 900 years of tumultuous history, the palazzo was given to the Italian state in 1920 and then bombed in World War II. Finally almost restored to its previous grandeur, it now holds changing art exhibitions in four galleries with renovated Late Empire rooms, which become part of the exhibition experience. Be sure to look around you to catch the opulent frescoed ceilings and fine

Palazzo Reale.

furnishings. Recently I have seen Vivienne Westwood and Francis Bacon retrospectives but themes are not always contemporary. In summer there are sometimes concerts and movie showings in the courtyard. A blockbuster Canaletto to Tiepolo exhibition is penciled in for fall 2009. *1½ hr. Piazza del Duomo, 12. 02 86 01 652. www.comunemilano.it/palazzoreale. Admission: depends on exhibition. Mon 2.30–7.30pm; Tues–Sun 9.30am–7.30pm (Thurs until 10.30pm). A stroll across Piazza del Duomo from Via Torino.*

6 Museo del Duomo. In the same complex as the Palazzo Reale and right opposite the south doors of the Duomo, this museum is currently closed and frustratingly nobody at the time of writing seems to have a clue when it will reopen, although mid-2009 has been mentioned in dispatches. Nevertheless the museum plays an important part in narrating the history of Milan's cathedral, and so a visit is vital if it has reopened when you're in Milan. It contains statues and artifacts removed from the Duomo between the 14th and 19th centuries, latterly for conservation purposes, including metalwork, a major *Christ in the Temple* by Jacopo Tintoretto (1518–94), and a wooden model of the Duomo as it stood in the early 16th century. *Piazza del Duomo, 14.*

7 ★★★ Piazza del Duomo. Take some time out and wander around the piazza; there's a magnificent sight from every vantage point, whether it be cathedral, galleria, or palazzo. There's not a better place in Milan to people-watch, but avoid the hawkers, who will try to flog you bread for the millions of pigeons, string bracelets, or books on saving your soul. Then amble down Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, take the first right and then left into Piazza San Fedele. *30 min. Piazza del Duomo. See p 7, bullet 1.*

8 ★ San Fedele. The Milanese aristocracy's church of choice has a large, plain Baroque façade

Piazza del Duomo.

Out of Town

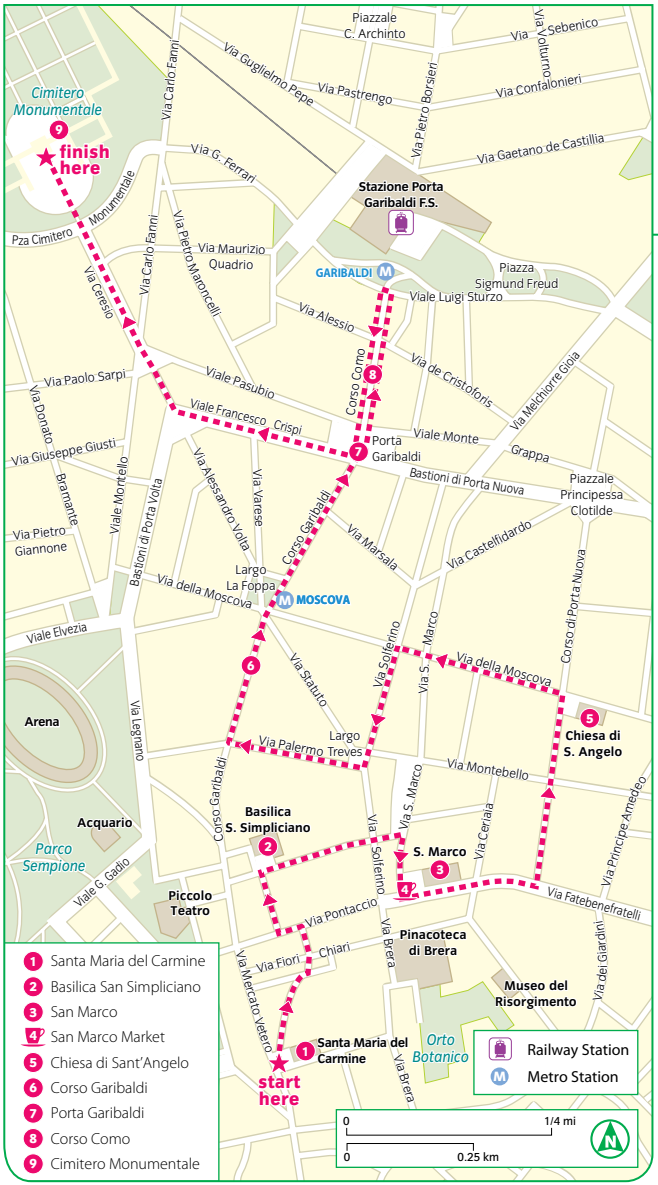
If you find yourself in Milan in August, you could be forgiven for wondering where everybody has gone. As the temperatures rise, and with tempers to match, those Milanese who can, run for the hills for the whole month to escape the humidity. Others slope off at the weekend, making the city feel like a ghost town. Shops are deserted, and many close for two weeks during the month (see p 66). Nightclubs move to summer locations outdoors, and previously booked restaurants welcome you with open arms. If the heat gets to you too, it's best to join the migration out of town to the Alps, the coast, or the Lakes (see p 121), where the thermometer is kinder, but if you join the exodus, chances are you'll find yourself sitting in a traffic jam alongside ***il tutto Milano*** (the whole of Milan).

commissioned in 1569 by Carlo Borromeo, leader of the Counter-Reformation. The austere, single-aisle interior is enlivened by baroque and Mannerist paintings of New Testament tales from Milanese artists Bernadino Campi and Giovan Battista Crespi. The statue in the piazza is of Alessandro Manzoni, revered author of *The Betrothed*, published in 1827. 🕘 ***30 min. Piazza San Fedele. ☎ 02 863 521. Admission free. Mon–Fri 7am–2.30pm; 4–7pm. 5 min from Piazza del Duomo.***

9 ★★★ Piazza della Scala. Turn right out of Piazza San Fedele and walk up Via Agnello to Piazza della Scala, dominated by the Palazzo Marino, Milan's city hall, and the statue of Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci, whose legacy looms bright in Milan. The legendary opera house (see p 106) is right opposite; there are guided tours backstage, showing the new stage tower on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3pm; however, at 120€ a shot for non-Italian speakers (☎ *02 43 353 521, www.teatroallascala.org*), I would be satisfied with peeking into the auditorium from the Museo della Scala (see p 13, bullet 2). If you have tickets for an opera performance or ballet (see p 106), enjoy dinner beforehand. Choose one of the restaurants along Via Manzoni or splash out on a gourmet feast, such as Trussardi alla Scala (see p 92). 🕘 ***30 min.***

Leonardo da Vinci statue, Piazza della Scala.

Brera **Churches**



Brera is an upmarket area full of expensive design boutiques, restaurants, and trendy nightspots, situated just east of Castello Sforzesco (see p 37, bullet 1) and stretching north to Piazza Garibaldi. It's also crammed with historic churches, with the same layering of history as seen on the west side of the city in churches such as Sant'Eustorgio (see p 26, bullet 4). Although not as grand in size or design, they are intimate inside and filled with religious treasures. Sadly several of them suffered at the hands of a 19th-century determination to rebuild their simple Romanesque façades. **START: Line 2 to Lanza Brera, then 15-minute walk.**

1 ★★★ Santa Maria del Carmine. From the Metro station head down Via Pontacci and take the first right into Via Ponte Vetero, a shop-lined street with plenty of foodie options if you need to pick up lunch-time provisions. The Baroque church of Santa Maria del Carmine sits in its paved, bar-lined piazza on the left, with an incongruous modern sculpture of a torso in front of it; this present incarnation was built in 1447 over the remains of a Romanesque basilica started in 1250 and partly remodeled in Gothic style in 1400. The patterned brickwork façade is in mock-Gothic-Lombard style and was added in 1880 by architect Carlo Maciachini (1818–99). Its flamboyant interior has three aisles and is laid out in a Latin cross plan with elaborate domed ceilings covered in frescoes; the floors are of terracotta and white marble and the ten side chapels are decorated with imposing oil paintings depicting biblical scenes. The fanciful Cappella di Rosario, to the right of the

Santa Maria del Carmine.

choir, is adorned with paintings of the Virgin Mary by Gerolamo Quadrio (d.1679). In the middle of all this grandeur stands the ornate silver and gilt altar, with a relief portraying *The Last Supper*. 🕘 ***45 min. Piazza del Carmine. ☎ 02 86 46 33 65. www.chiesadelcarmine.it. Admission free. Daily 7am–12pm, 4–7.15pm.***

❷ ★★ **Basilica San Simpliciano.** Turn right out of Piazza del Carmine on to pedestrianized Via Madonnina through Brera's backstreets to Via Pontacci. Cross the road and carry on up to San Simpliciano. The original 4th-century church was commissioned by Sant'Ambrogio and as often happened, was built over a pagan cemetery; it has been much modified over the years and in 1798 was even used as an army barracks during Napoleon's occupation of the city. Like other such buildings, it suffered from the attention of over-enthusiastic 19th-century town planners when Carlo Maciachini added its present façade in 1870; at least it is in his characteristic Gothic-Lombard style, with simple brickwork and arcaded windows. The lunette on the left window of the façade relates the legend of three martyrs who led the Milanese army to victory against German invader Barbarossa (in 1174). Inside the apse is decorated with frescoes by followers of Leonardo da Vinci and two massive pulpits guarding the silver altar. There are neat little frescoes of chubby cherubs by Milanese artist Aurelio Luini (1530–92) below the organ pipes. 🕘 ***30 min. Piazza San Simpliciano, 7. ☎ 02 862 474. Admission free. Daily 7.30am–12.30pm, 3–7pm. 5 min from Santa Maria del Carmine.***

Basilica San Simpliciano.

❸ ★★ **San Marco.** Follow Via Cavalieri del San Sepolcro around the back of San Simpliciano to Via Solferino and from there, turn right and immediately left into charming Piazza San Marco. The third of the Brera churches with a façade rehashed by **Carlo Maciachini** in 1871, San Marco bears a striking resemblance to Santa Maria del Carmine (see p 59, bullet ❶) on the outside, but with a lunette of the *Virgin Mary* between Saints over the entrance. Inside all was originally Gothic, with a nave and two side aisles. Now the reworked baroque interior is surprisingly light, laid out on the Latin cross plan and with vast 16th- and 17th-century Lombard-style paintings covering every inch of the walls in the nine side chapels. The highlight of these paintings is the copy of Caravaggio's *Deposition in the Cappella della Pietà* to the left of the altar—the original is in the Pinacoteca di Brera (see p 13, bullet ❶). Look up to see the frescoed vaulted ceilings over the altar and the marble-and-gilt seraphim carved around the domes. This is very much a family church, despite its

Detail on the façade of San Marco.

size and the splendor of its decoration. 🕘 ***45 min. Piazza San Marco, 2. ☎ 02 29 00 25 98. Admission free. Daily 7am–12pm, 4–7pm. 5 min from San Simpliciano.***

4 ★★★ San Marco Market. When you need a break from churches and you happen to be in the piazza on Monday or Thursday, you'll find a local food market to explore, with stalls at the church end selling bric-à-brac and second-hand DVDs. On other days, the Fashion Café (see p 98) provides a good lunchtime salad. ***Piazza San Marco. $.***

5 ★ Chiesa di Sant'Angelo. Turn left along busy Via de Fate-benefratelli and second left up Corso Porta Nuova to 16th-century Sant'Angelo, with its (refreshingly) colonnaded Renaissance façade topped off by angels blowing trumpets. Originally there was a Franciscan church on this site, but it was demolished to make way for the protective walls built around the city after it fell to the Spanish in 1525. What you see today was designed by architect Domenico Giunti (1505–60) in 1552, and inside the church is a fantasia of ornate frescoes, patterned marble, heavy gilt carvings on the domed ceilings, and Baroque statuary. It's all a bit over the top

Chiesa di Sant'Angelo.

Corso Como.

but nevertheless very significant for the amount of Lombard artists who painted here. 🕘 ***30 min. Piazza Sant'Angelo, 2. ☎ 02 632 481. Admission free. Mon–Fri 6.30am–8pm; Sat–Sun 8.30am–12pm, 4–8pm. 10 min from San Marco.***

6 ★★★ **Corso Garibaldi.** After Sant'Angelo, it's time for a change of pace and some window shopping along Corso Garibaldi, Milan's swinging street packed with tall apartment buildings, quality shops, bars, and cafés. In summer, tables line the street, cars park haphazardly, and a frenetic air prevails. If you can face another church, admire the double-fronted façade of 15th-century **Santa Maria Incoronata** (*Corso Garibaldi, 16, ☎ 02 65 48 55*), the home of a 15th-century Biblioteca Umanistica, which holds many fine manuscripts. 🕘 ***1 hr. Corso Garibaldi. 15 min from Sant'Angelo.***

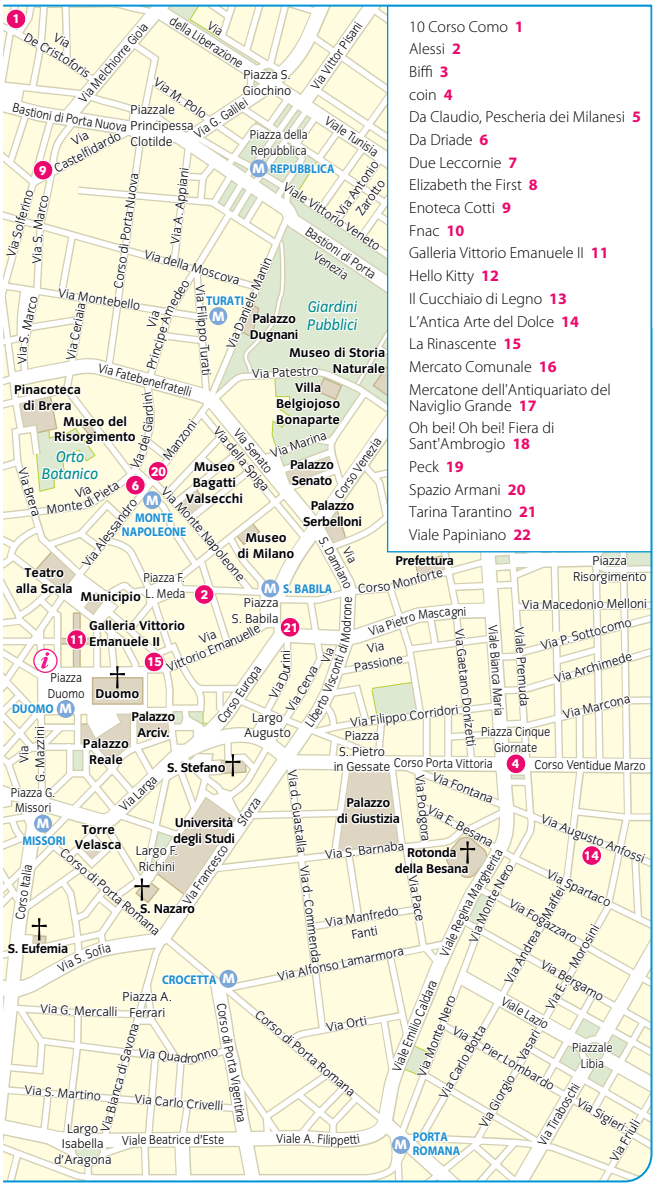
7 ★ **Porta Garibaldi.** Dominating the northern end of the street, this neoclassical arch was erected in 1826 and named after war hero Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82). 🕘 ***5 min. At end of Corso Garibaldi.***

8 ★★★ **Corso Como.** Walk under the impressive Porta Garibaldi and (carefully) cross Viale Crespi to Corso Como, made notorious by the opening of the boutique 10 Corso Como (see p 68) and numerous nightclubs (see p 97) where the rich and the beautiful of the city hang out. Take time out for some window shopping. 🕘 ***30 min. Corso Como.***

9 ★★ **Cimitero Monumentale.** It's a rather fumey and noisy walk along Viale Crespi and Via Ceresio to the cemetery of Milan's great and good, but worth it for a wander around the Liberty (Italian Art Nouveau) architecture of the ostentatious marble tombs. Many were fashioned by Carlo Maciachini, and the whole cemetery centers on a mausoleum called the Famedio, where such august personages as La Scala's conductor Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957) and much-loved novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873) were laid to rest—a sort of hall of fame for the dead. From here take a taxi back into the center of Milan or head towards Viale Montello and have supper in Chinatown at Trattoria Jubin (see p 92).
🕘 ***1 hr. Piazzale Cimitero Monumentale, 1. ☎ 02 65 99 938. Open Tues–Sun 8am–6pm. 20 min from Corso Como.*** ●

4 The Best **Shopping**

Milan Shopping


10 Corso Como 1
Alessi 2
Biffi 3
coin 4
Da Claudio, Pescheria dei Milanesi 5
Da Driade 6
Due Leccornie 7
Elizabeth the First 8
Enoteca Cotti 9
Fnac 10
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II 11
Hello Kitty 12
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TURATI
Palazzo Dugnani
Museo di Storia Naturale
Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte
Pinacoteca di Brera
Museo del Risorgimento
Orto Botanico
Museo Bagatti Valsecchi
Palazzo Senato
Palazzo Serbelloni
MONTE NAPOLEONE
Museo di Milano
Prefettura
Piazza Risorgimento
Teatro alla Scala
Municipio
S. BABILA
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II
Duomo
DUOMO
Palazzo Arciv.
Palazzo Reale
S. Stefano
Largo Augusto
Corso Vittorio
Corso Ventidue Marzo
Università degli Studi
Palazzo di Giustizia
Rotonda della Besana
MISSORI
Torre Velasca
S. Nazaro
S. Eufemia
CROCETTA
PORTA ROMANA
Piazzale Libia
Via Macedonio Melloni
Via P. Sottocorno
Via Archimede
Via Marcona
Via Filippo Corridoni
Via Fontana
Via Augusto Anfossi
Via Spartaco
Via Bergamo
Via Lazio
Via Pietro Mascagni
Via Passione
Via Vittorio Emanuele
Via Durini
Via Cerva
Via Larga
Via Torino
Via Manfredo Fanti
Via Alfonso Lamarmora
Via Orti
Via Quadronno
Via Carlo Crivelli
Via Carlo Botta
Via Giorgio Vasari
Via Tiraboschi
Via Sigieri
Via Friuli
Viale A. Filippetti
Viale Beatrice d'Este
Largo Isabella d'Aragona
Via S. Martino
Via S. Sofia
Via Solferino
Via S. Marco
Via Montebello
Via Ceriana
Via Brera
Via Monte di Pietà
Via Alessandro Manzoni
Via Monte Napoleone
Via della Spiga
Via del Giardino
Via Fatebenefratelli
Via Filippo Turati
Via Principe Amedeo
Via Daniele Manin
Via A. Appiani
Via della Moscova
Via Castelfidardo
Via Melchiorre Gioia
Via De Cristoforis
Via M. Polo
Via G. Galilei
Via Vittor Pisani
Viale Tunisia
Viale Vittorio Veneto
Via Antonio Zarotto
Corso di Porta Nuova
Corso Venezia
Via Senato
Via Marina
Via Damiano
Via Pietro Custodi
Via Gaetano Donizetti
Viale Bianca Maria
Viale Premuda
Via Monte Nero
Via Andrea Maffei
Via Fogazzaro
Via C. Morosini
Via Pace
Viale Regina Margherita
Via Podgora
Via E. Besana
Via S. Barnaba
Via d. Guastalla
Via d. Commenda
Corso Porta Romana
Corso di Porta Vigentina
Via Francesco Richini
Via Bianca di Savoia
Via G. Mercalli
Piazza A. Ferrari
Piazza F. L. Meda
Piazza S. Babila
Piazza Duomo
Piazza S. Pietro in Gessate
Piazza Cinque Giornate
Piazza G. Missori
Via G. Mazzini
Corso Europa
Corso Italia
Corso Porta Ticinese
Corso Porta Romana
Via Cerva
Via Durini
Via Passione
Via Filippo Corridoni
Via Fontana
Via Augusto Anfossi
Via Spartaco
Via Bergamo
Via Lazio
Via Pietro Mascagni
Via P. Sottocorno
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Via Spartaco
Via Bergamo
Via Lazio
Via Pietro Mascagni
Via P. Sottocorno
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Via Alfonso Lamarmora
Via Orti
Via Quadronno
Via Carlo Crivelli
Via Carlo Botta
Via Giorgio Vasari
Via Tiraboschi
Via Sigieri
Via Friuli

Shopping Best Bets

Best hand-blown glass at Vetrerie di Empoli.

Best **One-Stop Shopping**
★★★ La Rinascente, *Via Ulrico Hoepli (p 67)*

Best **Hand-Blown Glass**
★★★ Vetrerie di Empoli, *Via Montenapoleone, 22 (p 71)*

Best **Colorful Milanese Design**
★★★ Alessi, *Corso Matteotti, 9 (p 68)*

Most **Girly Gifts**
★ Hello Kitty, *Via Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 54 (p 71)*

Best **Shopping Mall**
★★★ Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II *(p 73)*

Best **Retro Clothing**
★★ Elizabeth the First, *Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 44 (p 74)*

Best for **Picnic Lunches**
★★ Peck, *Spadari, 9 (p 71)*

Best **Area for Designer Shopping**
★★★ Quadrilatero d'Oro *(p 73)*

Best **Market for Bargain Clothes**
★★★ Viale Papiniano *(p 74)*

Best **Sommelier**
★★ Enoteca Cotti, *Via Solferino, 42 (p 74)*

Shopping Know-How

Although many stores in the Centro Storico stay open Monday to Saturday, Milan's shop opening times are traditionally Tuesday to Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm, 3.30pm to 7.30pm. Some shops operate a half-day on Monday from 3.30pm to 7.30pm, with a few boutiques in the Quad d'Oro also opening Monday morning. Most shops close Sunday, except the central department stores, and many close for all of August.

Sales are held in January and July for two weeks. For information on sales tax and related rebates for non-E.U. residents, see p 66.

Quad d'Oro Shopping

Acqua di Parma **1**
Balenciaga **2**
Bally **3**
Bottega Veneta **4**
Bulgari **5**
Car Shoe **6**
Cartier **7**
Chanel **8**
Chopard **9**
Christian Dior **10**
Drogheria Parini **11**
Ferragamo **12**
Giorgio Armani **13**
Gran Caffè Cova **14**
Gucci **15**
Hermès **16**
Louis Vuitton **17**
Mont Blanc **18**
Omega **19**
Paul & Shark **20**
Prada **21**
Ralph Lauren **22**
Roberto Cavalli **23**
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Sermoneta **25**
Swatch **26**
Tiffany **27**
Tod's **28**
Valentino **29**
Versace **30**
Vetrerie di Empoli **31**
Yves Saint Laurent **32**

Milan **Shopping A to Z**

Books

★★ **Fnac** CENTRO STORICO Current best-selling novels and hardbacks are available in English along with DVDs and CDs, and there's even an online travel booking service. Also great for all your digital needs, from new memory cards for cameras to sim cards and mp3 players. ***Via Della Palla, 2. ☎ 02 720 821. www.fnac.it. AE, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 or 3 to Duomo or Line 3 to Missori. Map p 64.***

Department Stores

★★★ **coin** PORTA VITTORIA Famous for its well-priced beauty concessions, mid-range fashion, and leather accessories, coin has introduced some smart services including men's tailoring and a Veribel spa to its eight floors of merchandizing. ***Piazza Cinque Giornate, 1A. ☎ 02 55 19 20 83. www.coin.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 60. Map p 64.***

★ **La Rinascente** CENTRO STORICO The impressive flagship of Italy's most upmarket department store has seven floors of high fashion, accessories, scents, and household goods. Other amenities include a sleek spa, hairdresser, bars, rooftop restaurants (see p 67), and, best of all, a superb food market. ***Via Ulrico Hoepli. ☎ 02 88 521. www.rinascente.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 or 3 to Duomo. Map p 19.***

Design

★★★ Alessi CENTRO STORICO Only the Italians know how to make a pink plastic kettle look chic. Visit Alessi's three-story Milan showroom to transform your kitchen into a blaze of color or brighten your bath room. Top gadgets include bird-shaped china soy sauce pourers, 'parrot' corkscrews, and salt-and-pepper sets in the signature Alessi style. *Corso Matteotti, 9. ☎ 02 795 726. www.alessi.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 64.*

★★ Da Driade PORTA GENOVA The best names in international design are well displayed in an elegant palazzo on opulent Via Manzoni. Rooms are laid out in a series of styles, some frescoed, some with a splash of color in the seating, some minimalist, and all offering top-quality furnishings. *Palazzo Gallarati Scotti, Via Manzoni. ☎ 02 76 02 30 98. www.driade.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 64.*

Designers

★★★ 10 Corso Como PORTA GARIBALDI Duck under the archway into the world's cutest shop—a glittering emporium on several floors with a plant-filled courtyard, where the rich and beautiful of Milan come to flash their cash. Inside there's a boutique crammed with designs by Balenciaga, Chloé, and John-Paul Galliano, top-notch ceramics, and beautiful serving staff. Upstairs you'll find an art gallery and coffee-table book store. Come to ogle even if you can't afford the prices. *Corso Como, 10. ☎ 02 29 00 26 74. www.10corsocomo.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Garibaldi FS. Map p 64.*

Sushi bar, La Rinascente.

★★★ Acqua di Parma QUAD D'ORO The quintessential Italian scent since 1916, still sold in its classy purple-and-gold packaging. Given a new lease of life when taken over by LVMH in 2001, the company now has a range of after-shaves, balms, and colognes as well as sophisticated perfumes. *Via Gesù, 17. ☎ 02 7602 3307. www.acquadiparma.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 67.*

★★ Biffi PORTA GENOVA With clean white lines in the shop and an exceptional eye for new designers, the buyers at Biffi provide an excellent range of staples for every woman's wardrobe, from classic linen shirts to well-cut trousers and skirts. Ranges include John Galliano, Fendi, and Marni, plus leather accessories by Mulberry. *Corso Genova, 6. ☎ 02 89 40 24 26. www.biffi.com. AE, MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 64.*

★★ Car Shoe QUAD D'ORO The ultimate handmade loafers for the man who parks his Aston Martin on Via Montenapoleone every Saturday. Styles come in softest calf to shiny snakeskin, in colors from palest turquoise to deepest red, all with studded soles to prevent

Buying Food

Many of the more upmarket delis have a complicated system for ordering and paying for your goodies. At Peck and others, it works as follows: order at the counter and take your receipt to the cash desk and pay. Next, return to the counter with your receipt and pick up your beautifully wrapped parcels of food. The more upmarket cafés operate the same system; order and pay at the till before taking the receipt to the bar to get your drinks.

slippage while driving. There's a glossy range for women, too. ***Via della Spiga, 1. ☎ 02 7631 8460. www.carshoe.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 67.***

★★★ **Gucci** QUAD D'ORO As Italian as pasta with its instantly recognizable interlocking 'g' logo on its leather belts, shoes, wallets, and coveted bags; Gucci also has a vast store in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. ***Via Montenapoleone, 5–7. ☎ 02 771 271. www.gucci.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.***

★★★ **Paul & Shark** QUAD D'ORO Originally designed as hi-tech yachting gear, this brand is increasingly known for its quality leisure clothing. Look for simple stripey Ts, pristine white shirts, and classy padded jackets for women; cotton polos and Bermuda shorts for men have a casual, weekend vibe. ***Via Montenapoleone, 1. ☎ 02 7639 4457. www.paulshark.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 67.***

★★★ **Roberto Cavalli** QUAD D'ORO This flamboyant designer hit the big time in 1994. Today his exotic haute couture evening dresses are encrusted with sequins, stones, and leatherwork, and he also has a younger, diffusion line called Just Cavalli. Victoria Beckham has long been one of his muses. ***Via della Spiga, 42. ☎ 02 76 02 09 00. www.robertocavalli.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.***

★★ **Sermoneta** QUAD D'ORO The softest leather gloves in hundreds of colors, designs, and materials—options include linen or silk linings, fur or suede trimmings, and fancy stitching. Men's driving gloves come in serious blacks and browns. ***Via della Spiga, 46. ☎ 02 76 31 83 03. www.sermonetagloves.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.***

★★ **Spazio Armani** PORTA GENOVA With a Nobu sushi restaurant and Armani Café under the same roof, this stylish flagship store drips glamour even by Milanese standards. You'll find flowers, beautifully packaged confectionery, and wines, along with the classic Emporio Armani clothing line; upstairs Armani Casa provides simple designs for the well-dressed home. ***Via Manzoni, 31. ☎ 02 72 31 86 00. www.armani-viamanzoni31.it. AE, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 64.***

★★ **Tod's** QUAD D'ORO World-famous for their elegant loafers for men and women and many takes on the tote bag, Tod's have recently launched a jewelry collection, mixing leather and silver to make

Fresh from the Market

Most Italian households shop daily for food, disdaining supermarkets in favor of converging on local street markets where they can eye their chosen fruit and vegetables, discuss the provenance of the meat, and choose the freshest seafood. If you are self-catering, here's a list of central daily food markets. Opening hours are usually 8am until 1 or 2pm, with the exception of Viale Papiniano, which is open until around 5pm. **Via Cesariano** (Moscova) and **San Marco** (Lanza) Monday and Thursday; **Viale Papiniano** (Sant'Agostino, see p 74) Tuesday and Saturday; **Piazza Wagner** (see p 73) and **Piazzale XXIV Maggio** (Porta Genova) Tuesday to Saturday. Golden rules: don't haggle and don't handle the goods. Let the vendor choose and bag your produce for you.

chunky cuffs and bracelets. *Via della Spiga, 22.* ☎ *02 76 00 24 23. www.tods.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.*

★★ **Versace** QUAD D'ORO The crown king of lavish Italian haute couture, Gianni Versace's empire runs from heavily ornamented sunglasses to gold-packaged cosmetics and the sophisticated tailoring of his elegant day dresses. His home-furnishing store is at *Via Borgospesso, 15a. Via Montenapoleone, 11.* ☎ *02 76 01 12 71. www.versace.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.*

Food

★★★ kids **L'Antica Arte del Dolce** PORTA VITTORIA Milan's favorite confectioners is run by German patisserie chef Ernst Knam, who fills his shops with row upon row of heavenly cakes, gateaux, *panettone*, and luxury chocolates. *Via Augusto Anfossi, 10.* ☎ *02 55*

All kinds of pasta on display at Due Leccornie.

19 44 48. www.ernstknam.eu. Bus: 60. Map p 64.

★★★ **Da Claudio, Pescheria dei Milanesi** BRERA The counter displays at Milan's leading fish and seafood gastronomia are nothing short of miraculous in a shop renowned for the freshness and quality of its produce. If you have trouble deciding what to buy, *il padrone* (the boss) might give you a glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) to help you choose. Boxes of sushi are available as takeouts. ***Via Ponte Vetero, 16. ☎ 02 86 46 22 15. www.pescheriadaclaudio.it. MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 64.***

★★ **Drogheria Parini** QUAD D'ORO First opened in 1915, this Milanese institution is surprisingly British in style and produce. Pride of place goes to organic chutneys, jams, and blends of tea as well as Scottish whiskies and English biscuits. ***Via Borgospesso, 1. ☎ 02 76 00 23 03. MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.***

★★ **Due Leccornie** BRERA Divine foodie smells entice you into this old-fashioned store with great slabs of Grana Padano cheese on offer alongside wild boar and venison salamis and a million different shapes of pasta. Taste the wares before you buy. ***Via Mercato, 10. ☎ 02 72 02 28 77. MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 64.***

★★★ **Il Cucchiaio di Legno** BRERA Sleek and modern, 'the wooden spoon' epitomizes the new Milan of stark styling and minimalism. Among the trendy recipe books, designer olive oils, and *espresso* machines for sale, chef Andrea Valentinetti provides a tasting menu, featuring foie gras, smoked fish, salamis, and salads. ***Via Ponte Vetero, 13. ☎ 02 87 38 86 70. www.ilcucchiaiodilegno.it. MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 64.***

Jars of olives at Peck.

★★★ **Peck** CENTRO STORICO My favorite Milan deli, this gourmet spot is famous for seafood, cheeses, and salamis, pasta, breads, tasty dishes to go, and wonderful ice cream. Olive oils make great presents, but don't put them in your hand luggage—they'll be confiscated at customs. There's a café upstairs and a comprehensive basement *enoteca* (wine bar). ***Via Spadari, 9. ☎ 02 861 040. www.peck.it. MC, V. Metro: Line 1 or 3 to Duomo. Map p 64.***

Gifts

★★ **Hello Kitty** NAVIGLI A sweetly kitsch boutique on the corner of trendy Via Casale with lots of logo-ed T-shirts, straw baskets, motorbike helmets, and bottles of champagne, all in pink of course. The perfect present for girly teenagers who can write their thank-yous on pink Hello Kitty paper. ***Via Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 54. ☎ 02 89 42 34 54. MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 64.***

Glassware

★★★ **Vetrerie di Empoli** QUAD D'ORO A glittering, gleaming

Best Shopping Streets

Milan's eminently walkable heart boasts some of the best shopping in Europe; top-end fashion with top-end prices are concentrated in the north-east of the center, in the fabulous **Quad d'Oro** and along **Corso Como**, a truncated street close to Porta Garibaldi. Around **Piazza del Duomo** there is another smattering of designer shops in the elegant **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II**, and the classy department store La Rinascente is opposite the Duomo. From the piazza, **Via Torino** stretches southwest, home to international high-street brands and becoming progressively more down-market towards gritty **Corso di Porta Ticinese**, where you'll find one-off boutiques and tattoo parlors. This leads to the **Navigli** (see p 17, bullet 6), the closest Milan comes to a bohemian area, with independent design and thrift shops, plus secondhand book shops and a monthly antiques market along the canals (see p 73). There are more antiques in the tangle of backstreets west of the **Piazza del Duomo**, along **Via Manzoni** to the east, and in the fashion-conscious cobbled streets of **Brera** to the north.

assortment of beautifully gilded hand-blown glass in all the colors of the rainbow and all shapes and sizes, from goblets to decanters. Antique Venetian chandeliers sell for a hefty price. *Via Montenapoleone, 22. ☎ 02 54 50 321. www.vetreriediempoli.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 67.*

Jewelry

★★★ **Tarina Tarantino** CENTRO STORICO Lots of Barbie-themed necklaces and charm bracelets as well as chunky, hippy-dippy pendants and cuffs. More sophisticated are sparkly crystal earrings and pretty pink Lucite chokers. *Via Borgogna, 1. ☎ 02 76 39 80 48. www.tarinatarantino.com. MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to San Babilia. Map p 64.*

A host of designer stores can be found in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.

Mall

★★★ Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II CENTRO STORICO Milan's most elegant arcade links the Piazza del Duomo with La Scala; it is topped by a vast glass dome and lined with genteel cafés and staggeringly expensive shops. Sip a mid-morning *espresso* in the Gucci café (see p 43) and watch the monied classes cruising from Prada to Louis Vuitton and Swarovski Crystal. ***Piazza del Duomo. No phone. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 or 3 to Duomo. Map p 64.***

Markets

★ Mercato Comunale PIAZZA WAGNER Site of Milan's largest covered daily market, with stalls awash with prize produce, fruit, vegetables, and flowers. This is where much of Milan goes for the daily shop; it's a great place to pick up picnic goodies to enjoy in Parco Sempione nearby. ***Closed Sunday. Piazza Wagner. No credit cards. Metro: Line 1 to Piazza Wagner. Map p 64.***

Flowers at Mercato Comunale.

★★★ Mercatone dell'Antiquariato del Naviglio Grande NAVIGLI Held the first Sunday of every month, this 'antiques' market is likely to spawn more tat than genuine finds, but it has a bubbly atmosphere. Normally there are more than 400 stalls sprawling along the canalside. ***Alzaia Naviglio Grande. No credit cards. Metro Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 64.***

Quadrilatero d'Oro

Work on your *bella figura* to brave the hallowed network of shopping streets in the Quad d'Oro, Milan's, and indeed Italy's, premier designer shopping area. If it's Gucci, Prada, YSL, or Versace you're after, here's your natural habitat. Shop for logo-ed belts, bags, and shoes, and watch the Milanese smart set stalk past. Take home gilded and colored glass from Vetrerie di Empoli (see p 71), and stop off for a pit-stop ***espresso*** at Gran Caffè Cova (see p 87) when your credit cards are worn out. The area was once the home of the Milanese aristocracy and many of the boutiques are housed in handsome 17th- and 18th-century palazzi; pedestrianized Via della Spiga is the most attractive of the streets, while Via Montenapoleone has the lion's share of exclusive labels. Via Borgospesso has a series of wildly expensive antique shops offering glitzy gilded furniture and mirrors. The easiest way to get there is by taking Metro Line 3 to Montenapoleone on Via Manzoni.

Find a bargain at Viale Papiniano.

★★★ **Oh bei! Oh bei! Fiera di Sant'Ambrogio** CORSO MAGENTA/PARCO SEMPIONE An exciting and colorful Christmas street fair with traders coming from all over the world to sell leather accessories, toys, and jewelry. Get into the haggling and sip mulled wine with the vendors. ***Piazza Sant'Ambrogio and around Parco Sempione. No credit cards. Metro Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 64.***

★★ **Viale Papiniano** NAVIGLI Milan's most atmospheric bargain-basement market runs on Tuesday afternoons and every Saturday, spreading noisily along the center of the street for several blocks. You might be lucky enough to unearth a pair of discounted Gucci shoes, but it's more probable that you'll snap up cut-price sarongs and sportswear. ***Viale Papiniano. No credit cards. Metro: Line 2 to Sant Agostino. Map p 64.***

Vintage Fashion

★ **Elizabeth the First** NAVIGLI In a city obsessed with designer labels, it's refreshing to find a great collection of retro clothing. Lots of party dresses are almost out-sparkled by the unusual selection of vintage kimonos, Afghan smocks, and embroidered Turkish coats. ***Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 44. ☎ 02 89 07 79 27. www.elizabethefirst.com. No credit cards. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 64.***

Wine Merchant

★★ **Enoteca Cotti** BRERA Under the lovely, Liberty (Art Nouveau) premises, Luigi Cotti stocks more than 1,000 Italian wines in vaults kept at a constant 14–18°C (57–64°F). Grappa fans have a separate tasting room with 300 brands to choose from. ***Via Solferino, 42. ☎ 02 65 72 995. www.enotecacotti.it. AE, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 64.*** ●

Designer Names

With more than 150 stores packed into the six streets of the Quad d'Oro, all the big names are there; a smattering of jewelers include Cartier, Tiffany, Bulgari, and Chopard. Slightly more affordable, Swatch, Rolex, and Omega also make a couple of appearances. Accessory designers Mont Blanc, Tod's, Hermès, Bottega Veneta, and Bally compete with Balenciaga, YSL, Chanel, Prada, Ralph Lauren, Ferragamo, Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Valentino, Giorgio Armani, Versace, and Roberto Cavalli for custom. If the budget prohibits spending, this is an amazing area for a spot of people-watching.

5 Milan **Outdoors**

Milan **Outdoors**

Despite being a dense and intensely urbanized city, Milan does have its luscious green spaces; parks where locals wrap up to walk their beloved pooches in winter, jog off pasta lunches, and relax with their families over weekend picnics. Boat trips explore the canals of the Navigli and, when the sun comes out, office workers snooze in the shade and shoppers make merry in pavement cafés all over the city. **START: Metro Lines 1 or 2 to Cadorna.**

1 ★★★ kids Torre Branca. Take the slow elevator to the top of the Torre Branca for 360-degree views over Parco Sempione (see bullet 2) and right down over orange-tile rooftops to the Duomo (see p 79, bullet 2). Milan's mini-answer to the Eiffel Tower is a spiky mesh of steel tubes, 108m (354ft) high, and was built by Giò Ponti in 1933 to mark the Triennale design exhibition; a night-time trip over the twinkling city lights is magical. Finish off with a drink in Roberto Cavalli's designer bar, Just Cavalli Café (see p 98). *30 min. Via Camoens. ☎ 02 33 14 120. Admission 3€. Wed, Sat, Sun various times. Metro: Lines 1 or 2 to Cadorna.*

2 ★★★ kids Parco Sempione. The green lungs of central Milan were once the hunting grounds of Milanese leader Francesco Sforza (1401–66), builder of the massive Castello Sforzesco (see p 31, bullet 1) on the park's southern fringes. Where deer and hare once roamed, lovers now stroll down pathways in the shade of giant chestnuts and past flowerbeds designed in the popular English Romantic style by Emilio Alemagna in 1893, while youngsters run around or play with sail boats on the artificial lake. Sculptures and monuments scatter the gardens, including Surrealist Giorgio de Chirico's (1888–1978) fountain entitled *Mysterious Baths*. *1–2 hrs. See p 31, bullet 4.*

3 ★★ Arco della Pace. Found at the northwest side of Parco Sempione, the Arco began life in 1807 as a monument to Napoleon, designed by architect Luigi Cagnola (1762–1833); however, its use was subverted after the emperor's demise. Work stalled following Napoleon's defeat and the 1815 Treaty of Paris. The arch became a symbol of

Parco Sempione.

peace, finally inaugurated in 1838 on Ferdinand I's coronation. Today the vast marble arch is topped with the bronze Chariot of Peace, pulled by six magnificent horses all cast from single pieces of bronze. To the north of the arch, views lead right down the tree-lined boulevard of Corso Sempione. The piazza around the arch is the scene of the Milan d'Estate summer concerts but is otherwise best avoided after dark. 🕘 *10 min. Piazza Castello. Admission free. Daily 7am–7pm (later in summer). Metro: Lines 1 and 2 to Cadorna or Line 1 to Cairoli.*

4 ★★★ **Brera.** From Parco Sempione, cross Foro Buonaparte and turn left along Via Ponte Vetero, cutting through Piazza del Carmine to explore the crowded little streets of Carpoforo and Fiori Chiari in the heart of stylish Brera. This is my favorite place to shop in the design emporiums (see p 68), watch the street entertainers, or even have your portrait painted in the street. Get there before midday or after 3.30pm, otherwise the shops will be closed. 🕘 *1 hr, longer if eating.*

5 ★★★ **Bar Brera.** To get into Brera mode, I sit outside on this busy corner and watch the belle monde waft past while embarking on huge platters of fresh seafood salads and *carpaccio* (slivers of raw beef). *Via Brera 23.* ☎ *02 877 091. $$.*

6 ★★ **Orto Botanico.** Tucked behind the glorious Pinacoteca di Brera (see p 37, bullet 1), these tranquil botanical gardens were established in 1774 under the auspices of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, also patroness of the Pinacoteca. At 5,000m2 (53,819ft2), they are one of Milan's best-kept secrets, always quiet and always changing with the seasons. Today run by the University of Milan, the gardens contain neat flowerbeds laid out in lines of herbs and medicinal plants as well as Italy's oldest ginkgo tree. 🕘 *30 min. Via Brera, 28.* ☎ *02 89 01 04 19. Admission free. Mon–Fri 9am–12pm, 1–4pm. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone.*

7 ★★★ kids **Giardini Pubblici.** From Via Brera turn left on to Via

Giardini Pubblici.

Parco delle Basiliche.

Monte di Pietà and left again on to Via Manzoni. Sometimes I sidetrack into the Quad d'Oro for some window shopping (see p 73, bullet 6) but you can carry straight on to bustling Piazza Cavour and escape into the Giardini Pubblici. This park is a haven from the din of the roads surrounding it, planted with shade-giving trees and landscaped with ornamental ponds populated with ducks and geese. A couple of bars and lots of attractions for kids (see p 34, bullet 7) make it the perfect afternoon pitstop, although the bars are packed out during early summer. There's an annual flower show here every May. 🕘 ***2 hr. See p 34, bullet 7.***

8 ★★ kids **Bar Bianco.** I recommend this place for its position overlooking the lake in the Giardini Pubblici rather than its simple tuna salads, panini, and pastas. Eat inside or out, but get ready to dodge the greedy blackbirds and pigeons on the shady terrace. ***Giardini Pubblici.*** ☎ ***02 29 52 33 54. $.***

9 ★★★ **Piazza del Duomo.** Head off past the elegant Liberty-style palazzi of Corso Venezia towards the city center, before walking up Corso Vittorio Emanuele II to Piazza del Duomo. If you didn't have a restorative beer in the Giardini Pubblici, put your feet up in one of the cafés over a glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) and enjoy the view of the bristling Duomo across the square. 🕘 ***30 min. Piazza del Duomo. Metro: Line 1 to Duomo.***

10 ★★ **Parco delle Basiliche.** A 15-minute walk down shop-lined Via Torino (see p 72), this delightful little park is virtually unknown to visitors and in summer months is full of young Italians sunbathing while local children let off steam. The gardens were created in 1934 after many of the Navigli canals (see p 80, bullet 12) were covered over. Previously the area was the site of Milan's pubic executions. Although well planted with trees, the major attractions here are the looming basilicas of San Lorenzo (see p 25,

Bars and cafés along the canal.

bullet 2) and Sant'Eustorgio (see p 26, bullet 3). Stop here to catch your breath after visiting the Museo Diocesano (see p 27, bullet 5). The area around the churches and park changes character at night and should be avoided. 🕘 ***40 min. Piazza della Vetra. Daily 6.30am–10/11.30pm. Metro: Line 3 to Missori.***

11 ★★★ kids **Piscina Solari.** In hot weather, families with fractious children can take a right at Porta Ticinese to the cool of the indoor pool in Parco Solari. Weary adults will appreciate the solarium, and the barbecues on summer evenings. 🕘 ***1 hr. Via Montevideo, 20. ☎ 02 46 95 278. Admission 4€. Daily various times. Metro: Line 2 to Sant'Agostino.***

12 ★★ kids **Navigli.** Retrace your steps to Porta Ticinese, where a small produce market straggles on to the street by the Darsena river basin. This market links the canals of Grande and Pavese, the only two remaining from a network forming Milan's port until the early 20th century. Often there are ethnic stalls on the canal banks, where knock-off sunglasses, bags, and belts are sold at prices that can be haggled down. Best seen on sunny days or on the third Sunday of the month when the antiques market kicks in (see p 73); the Navigli can be bleak on foggy autumn nights, when many restaurants shut early and it lacks the bubbly atmosphere of summertime. However, whenever you come, there's plenty to explore: bars, cafés, and independent shops (see p 17) stretch along both canals and a couple of barges feature jazz clubs at night (see p 97). 🕘 ***1 hr. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. See p 17, bullet 6.***

13 ★ kids **Navigli Canal Trip.** To see the Navigli from a different perspective, join a 2-hour tour of the canals and Darsena basin to travel through locks and see the canal-side *ringhiere* (workers' houses) being gentrified and learn of the work being done to keep the canals clean. 🕘 ***2 hr. Alzaia del Navigli Grande, 66. ☎ 02 67 02 02 80. www.incomingpartners.it. Tours twice daily Apr–Sept: 9.30am and 4pm. Tickets: 18€. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova.*** ●

Market stall in Navigli.

6 The Best **Dining**

Milan Dining

Al Treno di Mezzanotte **1**
Al Valentino **2**
Anema e Cozze **3**
Antico Ristorante Bœucc **4**
Bentobar **5**
Biffi in Galleria **6**
Centro Ittico **7**
Cova **8**
Farinella **9**
Grand Caffè Biffi **10**
Hostaria Borromei **11**
Joia **12**
Masuelli San Marco **13**
Nabucco **14**
òbikà **15**
Pasticceria Marchesi **16**
Pizzeria La Tradizionale **17**
Radetzky **18**
Rinomata Gelateria **19**
Ristorante Cracco **20**
Ristorante La Terrazza **21**
Ristorante Solferino **22**
Sans Egal **23**
Sant'Ambroeus **24**
Serendepico **25**
Sophia's Restaurant **26**
Trattoria Jubin **27**
Trussardi alla Scala **28**
Victory Milano **29**
Zucca in Galleria **30**

Dining Best Bets

Zucca is a great venue for people watching.

Best **Vegetarian Restaurant**
★★★ Joia $$$ *Via P Castaldi, 18. (p 87)*

Best **Seafood**
★★ Centro Ittico $$$$ *Via Martiri Oscuri, 19. (p 86)*

Most expensive **Michelin Star**
★★★ Ristorante Cracco $$$$$ *Via Victor Hugo, 4. (p 89)*

Best for **Courtyard Dining**
★★★ Hostaria Borromei $$$ *Via Borromei, 4. (p 87)*

Best **Place to People Watch**
★★★ Zucca in Galleria $$ *Piazza del Duomo, 21. (p 92)*

Best **Canal Views**
★★★ Anema e Cozze $$ *Via Casale, 7. (p 85)*

Best **Ice Cream**
★★★ Rinomata Gelateria $ *Alzaia Naviglio Pavese, 2. (p 89)*

Most **Fashion-Conscious Hotel Restaurant**
★★★ Sophia's Restaurant $$$$ *Hotel Enterprise, Corso Sempione, 93. (p 91)*

Best **Sushi**
★★ Bentobar $$$ *Corso Garibaldi, 104. (p 85)*

Best **View from a Restaurant Terrace**
★★ òbikà $$$ *La Rinascente, Via Santa Radegonda, 3. (p 88)*

Best **Restaurant out of the City Center**
★★★ Al Valentino $$ *Via Faravelli, 8. (p 85)*

Most **Traditional Destination**
★ Antico Ristorante Bœucc $$$$ *Piazza Belgioioso, 2. (p 85)*

Best for **Chocoholics**
★★ Pasticceria Marchesi *Santa Maria alla Porta, 11a. (p 88)*

Best for **Hungry Kids**
Farinella $$ *Largo Cairoli/ Foro Buonaparte, 71. (p 87)*

Best **Pizza**
★★★ Pizzeria La Tradizionale $$ *Via Ripa di Porta Ticinese, 7. (p 89)*

Best **Noodles**
★★ Trattoria Jubin $$ *Via Paolo Sarpi, 11. (p 92)*

Best for **Aperitifs**
★★ Grand Caffè Biffi $$$ *Corso Magenta, 87. (p 87)*

Most **Genteel Surroundings**
★★★ Sant'Ambroeus *Corso Matteoti, 7 (p 90)*

Milan Dining **A to Z**

★★ Al Treno di Mezzanotte BRERA *TRATTORIA* All aboard for dinner in the Art Deco surroundings of a dining room modeled on the Orient Express—there are even frescoes showing scenes from the famous rail journey. With *bresaola* (slivers of cured beef), black pasta with prawns, and swordfish on the menu, this is the perfect place for a leisurely Saturday brunch. ***Via Fiori Chiari, 8. ☎ 02 80 56 227. www.orient-express.it. Entrees 15–40€. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera. Map p 82.***

★★ Al Valentino CORSO SEMPIONE *PIZZA* I recommend this neighborhood restaurant with a difference for visitors staying on Corso Sempione. It's convivial, the service efficient, and the pasta *al pesto*, pizzas, steaks, and cheeseboard all excellent. The waiters may offer you their 'secret' liquor—it's chocolate-flavored and delicious, but comes with a big kick. ***Via Faravelli, 8. ☎ 02 34 53 83 99. www.hardrock.com. Entrees 10–35€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat, dinner Sun. Bus: 1, 11, 19, 43, 48, 57, 78. Map p 82.***

★★★ kids Anema e Cozze NAVIGLI *SEAFOOD* A little touch of Napoli and the current darling of the Navigli set, this nautically themed restaurant heaves with contented bods tucking into bowls of mussels and mammoth seafood pizzas. It's great value, the food is good, and there are tables outside overlooking the Naviglio Grande. This branch is my favorite, others are at Corso Sempione, 41 (☎ 02 33 19 260); Via Palermo, 15 (☎ 02 86 46 16 46); and Via Orseolo, 1 (☎ 02 83 75 459). ***Via Casale, 7. ☎ 02 83 75 459. anemaecozze.tn.agoramed.it. Entrees 12–35€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Tues–Fri, dinner Sat. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 82.***

★ Antico Ristorante Bœucc CENTRO STORICO *MILANESE* Dress up for Milan's oldest restaurant, opened in 1696—and very pleased with itself it is, too. The atmosphere is subdued, with elegant drapery and chandeliers dripping from vaulted ceilings. Luckily the courteous service and decent cuisine just about prevents it all from becoming pretentious. My preferred options include mozzarella with tomatoes and basil, tuna *carpaccio*, and veal escalopes. ***Piazza Belgioioso, 2. ☎ 02 760 2 28 80. www.boeucc.com. Entrees 25–75€. AE. Lunch and dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat–Sun. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

★★ Bentobar BRERA *SUSHI* This smart Japanese bar is decorated in reds and bamboo. The food is spectacular: sushi of tuna, salmon, squid, and prawns. For a special treat, order the seafood platter,

Anema e Cozze.

Biffi in Galleria.

decorated with oyster shells filled with delicate seafood, topped with a colorful chrysanthemum. Vegetarian options and takeout bento boxes are available. ***Corso Garibaldi, 104. ☎ 02 65 98 075. www.bentobar.com. Entrees 15–45€. AE, D, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova. Map p 82.***

★★ Biffi in Galleria CENTRO STORICO *CAFÉ* The first grand café in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (see p 8, bullet 3) was run by confectioner Paolo Biffi when it opened in 1867. Today, it has expanded to serve food as well as sweets and pastries in its elegant salons, open from breakfast (stand at the bar to blend with the locals) to midnight, serving Milanese specialties (try the risotto with cuttlefish ink) to discerning locals and tourists as well as a late-night, after-theater crowd. ***Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. ☎ 02 80 57 961. www.biffigalleria.it. Entrees 20–45€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

★★ Centro Ittico STAZIONE CENTRALE *FISH* This restaurant-cum-fish shop is by the tracks at Stazione Centrale and people queue at the overflowing counter to snap up the fish as it arrives. The menu varies according to the day's catch but normally features *carpaccio*, fish soup, a risotto, and *spaghetti alle vongole* (with clams and garlic). Book well in advance and still be prepared to wait in an atmosphere of gentle chaos. ***Via Martiri Oscuri, 19. ☎ 02 26 14 37 74. www.acena.***

Sweet treats at Cova.

Joia.

it/centroittico. Entrees 20–60€. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 1 to Rovereto. Map p 82.

★★ **Cova** QUAD D'ORO *CAFÉ* Established in 1817, sophisticated Cova does a roaring trade when the fabulous shops of the Quad d'Oro are open (see p 73). It's as famous for its lighter-than-light *panettone* cake, made to a secret recipe, and its beautifully wrapped boxes of pralines, jellies, and hazelnut chocolates, as it is for its aromatic coffee, a blend of seven bean varieties served in delicate china cups. ***Via Montenapoleone, 8. ☎ 02 76 00 55 99. www.pasticceriacova.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 82.***

kids **Farinella** PARCO SEMPIONE *PASTA & PIZZA* In pole position opposite the entrance to Parco Sempione, this cavernous and well-designed restaurant suffers from poor service— but on the plus side the portions of spaghetti Bolognese and pizza are large and cheap. I recommend it for those with demanding kids who won't wait long for refueling. ***Largo Cairoli/ Foro Buonaparte, 71. ☎ 02 89 09 50 84. Entrees 10–25€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 82.***

★★ **Grand Caffè Biffi** CENTRO STORICO *CAFÉ* The second branch of this Milan institution (see Biffi in Galleria) is one of my favorite places for an evening *aperitivo*. It's also popular with trendy young families as a weekend drop in for a *kir royale* at lunchtime. ***Corso Magenta, 87. ☎ 02 48 00 67 02. www.biffigalleria.it. Entrees 20–45€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Metro: Lines 1 to Conciliazione. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Hostaria Borromei** CENTRO STORICO *LOMBARDIAN* Book in advance to dine on the romantic vine-covered terrace of this simple, whitewashed hostaria hidden away behind a palazzo. Serving superb local salami antipasti, risottos, *osso bucco* (veal shanks), and fresh fish of the day, this family-run restaurant is one to savor over a long, leisurely evening. ***Via Borromei, 4. ☎ 02 86 45 37 60. www.hostariaborromei.com. Entrees 20–45€. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat. Metro: Line 1 to Cordusio. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Joia** PORTA VENEZIA *VEGETARIAN* One of Milan's few

Restaurant Etiquette

Check your bill before leaving a tip; service charge is usually included. If it isn't, round up your bill to the nearest euro in a trattoria or pizzeria, or to the nearest five or 10 euros in a more expensive restaurant.

And do remember that if you are going to a smart restaurant, you will be expected to dress up; no skimpy tops and certainly no shorts.

vegetarian restaurants and a Michelin-starred one at that, in a subtle wooden dining room. There's an excellent 12-course taster menu and a set five-course feast at lunchtime. The Swiss chef Pietro Leeman draws on the best organic local food to create dream dishes such as *garbanzo* (chickpea) and shallot risotto. ***Via P Castaldi, 18. ☎ 02 29 52 21 24. www.joia.it. Entrees 30€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat. Metro: Line 1 to Porta Venezia. Map p 82.***

★ **Masuelli San Marco** PORTA VITTORIA *TRATTORIA* Walls and floors decorated with dark traditional tiles are offset by gleaming white table linen at this noisy trattoria, stuffed with happy families at the weekend. My favorite dishes include Milanese risotto flavored with saffron, pasta and beans, and Piemontese *osso bucco* (braised veal shanks). ***Via Umbria, 80. ☎ 02 55 18 41 38. www.masuelli-trattoria.com. Entrees 20–50€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner Tues–Sat, dinner Sun. Metro: Line 3 to Lodi Tibb. Map p 82.***

★★★ kids **Nabucco** BRERA *TRATTORIA* Nabucco offers a warm welcome and the cheering sight of a complimentary glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) at your table on the tiny streetside patio. Traditional local dishes are expertly served (lobster linguine, veal cutlet) and the dining room stays open until after 10.30pm. ***Via Fiori Chiari, 10. ☎ 02 86 06 63. www.nabucco.it. Entrees 15–40€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera. p 82.***

★★★ kids **òbikà** CENTRO STORICO *ITALIAN* The clean design and dramatic views of the Duomo spires make òbikà a favorite for lunch. It's in the superb food department at La Rinascente (see p 67) and the menu celebrates the best of Italian artisanal food: *prosciutto*, *bresaola* (slivers of cured dried beef), and cherry tomatoes bursting with flavor. The star of the show is the *Mozzarella di Bufala Campana*, served delicately flavored, smoked, or chilli-sprinkled that packs a punch. ***La Rinascente, Via Santa Radegonda, 3. ☎ 02 88 52 453. www.obika.it. Entrees 15–35€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

★★ **Pasticceria Marchesi** CORSO MAGENTA *PASTICCERIA* Milan's top chocolatier, serving rich confectionery alongside elegant pastries and extravagant tortes. The glass display cases and counters have been there since the café was founded in 1824. Eat in or take out some bonbons. ***Via Santa Maria alla Porta, 11a. ☎ 02 876 730. www.pasticceriamarchesi.it. AE, MC, V. Open Tues–Sun. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 82.***

★★★ kids **Pizzeria La Tradizionale** NAVIGLI *PIZZA* Puffy pizzas come straight from the wood-fired oven at the back of the restaurant and you'll spend your time watching the chef effortlessly flip the dough in the air. The bustling atmosphere and a vast, frescoed room full of chatty, smiling waiters makes this one of the best options in Navigli. There's a great choice of fish and pasta too—combine the two for perfect *spaghetti vongole* (pasta with clams). Open Sunday evenings during winter. Booking recommended. ***Via Ripa di Porta Ticinese, 7. ☎ 02 83 95 133. www.latradizionale.com. Entrees 10–25€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner Thurs–Tues. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 82.***

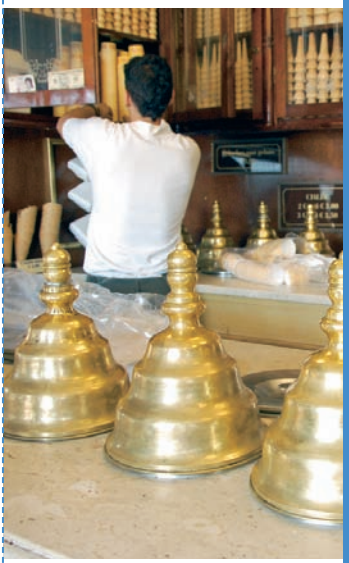
★★★ **Radetzky** BRERA *CAFÉ* As one of the few central bars open on Sunday, Radetzky is mobbed by a cliquey crowd at brunch, when its famous veal schnitzel *alla Milanese* is served. During the week, the groomed clientele drop in for Happy Hour and often stay until the music stops at 3am, by which time the party has overflowed onto the street on summer evenings. ***Piazza Garibaldi, 105. ☎ 02 65 72 105. Entrees 10–25€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova. Map p 82.***

★★★ kids **Rinomata Gelateria** NAVIGLI *ICE CREAM* Milan's tastiest ice cream in town in exotic flavors kept under wraps in brass domes at the Navigli's old-fashioned gelateria. Cones (*cono*) and cups (*copa*) in varying sizes line up on wooden shelves. ***Alzaia Naviglio Pavese, 2. ☎ 02 58 11 38 77. Daily, closed Mon in winter. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Ristorante Cracco** CENTRO STORICO *GOURMET ITALIAN* Once part of the Peck (see p 71) empire and now owned by Michelin-starred chef Carlo Cracco, this restaurant has a reverential atmosphere and polished service. Tables bristle with linen, the superb food is classic Milanese with a modern twist (oysters, shellfish, and pigeon) and the wine list has 2,500 labels. Reservations are vital. ***Via Victor Hugo, 4. ☎ 02 876 774. Set menu 130–160€. AE, DC, MC, V. Dinner Mon, lunch and dinner Tues–Fri. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

★ **Ristorante La Terrazza** PIAZZA LIMA *MODERN ITALIAN* This sixth-floor hotel restaurant comes into its own, with mood lighting and views over the twinkling skyline of Milan. Specialties include *bresaola* (slivers of cured beef) stuffed with goat's cheese, seafood risotto, and an excellent cheese platter with blue Dolcelatte and Grana Padano. ***Hotel Galles (see p 114), Piazza Lima, 2. ☎ 02 20 48 433. www.galles.it. Entrees 20–45€.***

Rinomata Gelateria.



Cappuccino Time

Breakfast in the city is often taken standing up at a bar; un caffè (a frighteningly strong and minute *espresso*) or a frothy *cappuccino* is ordered alongside a brioche or croissant. If you are after a milky coffee, ask for *caffè macchiato*, or order a really milky *latte macchiato*, normally served in a glass. Morning is the only time of day when drinking *cappuccino* is acceptable to Italians.

Later in the day ask for a *caffè Americano*, Milan's answer to filter coffee, which is usually an *espresso* topped up with hot water. Post-prandial favorites include *caffè corretto*, an *espresso* enlivened with a slug of grappa or sambucca liquors.

AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 1 to Porta Venezia. Map p 82.

★★ **Ristorante Solferino** BRERA *MILANESE* Reopened after a facelift in late 2008, this trattoria is full of the clamor of satisfied dinners; the tables are laid with thick white linens and the walls hung with heavy mirrors. Traditional bistro dishes are given the contemporary treatment, such as *gnocchi* (potato dumplings) stuffed with cheese or veal kidneys with *porcini* mushrooms. ***Via Castelfidardo, 2. ☎ 02 29 00 57 48. www.ilsolferino.com. Entrees 20–55€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova. Map p 82.***

★★ kids **Sans Egal** BRERA *TRATTORIA* Sans Egal has a flower-strewn heated patio outside, and a long wooden bar inside for cocktails on leopard-skin banquettes. Linger on for quality salamis, pasta (the *trofie al pesto* is delicious), and steak, served in a frenetic atmosphere by cheery waiters. ***Vicolo Fiori, 2. ☎ 02 86 93 096. www.sansegal.it. Entrees 10–40€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Sant'Ambroeus** CENTRO STORICO *CAFÉ* Just off the Quad d'Oro, this is popular with well-heeled ladies for delicious *spuntini* (mid-morning snacks) and afternoon teas of homemade pralines, and *panettone*. There's also a lavish series of culinary delights for *aperitivo* time. Salmon tartlets, stuffed olives, *prosciutto*, and local sheep's cheeses go well with excellent Camparis, served in Belle Epoque surroundings. ***Corso Matteoti, 7. ☎ 02 76 00 05 40. www.santambroeus milano.it. Entrees 8–20€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Serendepico** PARCO SEMPIONE *PASTA/PIZZA* The tables outside trendy Serendepico fill up with glamorous locals on summer evenings for the views of Castello Sforzesco across the way. Go for the excellent Italian version of tapas (see p 16) served at *aperitivo* time (after 8pm). Stay clear of the speakers at the back of the minimalist bar, or be deafened by drum'n'bass. ***Piazza Castello, 1. ☎ 02 80 50 19 52. www.serendepico.it. Entrees 20–45€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Cairoli. Map p 82.***

Sophia's Restaurant.

★★★ Sophia's Restaurant
CORSO SEMPIONE *MODERN ITALIAN* Usually, ensconced on the second floor of the hotel of the moment, Enterprise (see p 115), in summer Sophia's moves downstairs to a stylish indoor conservatory. The menu changes seasonally but

What's on the Menu?

Milanese culture revolves around a love of quality food and drink; every day bars, restaurants, and cafés fill up with friends, colleagues, and families celebrating their cuisine. Leisurely, noisy weekend lunches spread into evening, whereas people sit down to dinner around 8–8.30pm. Here is what you will see on most menus:
Antipasto Starter.
Primo First main course, normally pasta, risotto, or soup.
Secondo Main course, usually meat or fish, usually with a vegetarian option, served with **Contorni** (vegetables).
Dolce Pudding, usually ice cream or tiramisù.
Formaggio Cheeses.
Espresso Strong black coffee.

Although portions are not always huge, don't feel obliged to wolf down the whole lot; I always order a simple ***primo*** of pasta or risotto at lunchtime, and maybe an ***antipasto*** and ***secondo*** at dinner, followed by either dessert or cheese.

includes ravioli stuffed with sea bream and rabbit served with asparagus and leek, plus a selection of tangy local cheeses. Expect to dine alongside a clientele of stick-thin models of both sexes. ***Hotel Enterprise, Corso Sempione, 93. ☎ 02 31 81 88 55. www.sophiarestaurant.com. Lunch and dinner daily. Entrees 18–40€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus: 1, 11, 19, 43, 48, 57, 78. Map p 82.***

★★ **Trattoria Jubin** CHINATOWN *ASIAN* Although it doesn't look much at all from the outside, this is arguably the best restaurant in Chinatown, with decent Singapore noodles and Szechuan chicken, plus a smattering of Thai and Japanese dishes. There's not much to be said about the service except that it's fast. ***Via Paolo Sarpi, 11. ☎ 02 33 10 67 28. Entrees 18–25€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Trussardi alla Scala** CENTRO STORICO *GOURMET* It's treat time. Book in advance for a gastronomic blow out at this double Michelin-starred eatery with views from its second-floor windows over the Piazza della Scala (see p 57, bullet 9). Dress up to feel at home in the gentrified atmosphere and sample chef Andrea Berton's delicate pumpkin ravioli and pigeon breast. ***Piazza della Scala, 5. ☎ 02 06 88 201. www.trusardiallascala.com. Entrees 35–60€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Fri; dinner Sat. Metro: Line 1 or 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

Trussardi alla Scala.

★ **Victory Milano** CENTRO STORICO *MILANESE* A reasonable option considering its location minutes away from Piazza del Duomo. During the day, decent snacks of stuffed ciabatta, *farro* (pearl barley with mozzarella and tomatoes), and sharp-tasting chocolate *torta* are on the menu; at night *aperitivi* and live music draw a young crowd. ***Via Borgogna, 5. ☎ 02 76 02 07 18. www.victorymilano.com. Entrees 10–25€. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Metro: Line 1 to San Babila. Map p 82.***

★★★ **Zucca in Galleria** CENTRO STORICO *CAFÉ* Zucca has been a thriving Milan tradition since 1867. Stand at the old-fashioned wooden bar for an *aperitivo* (it's cheaper than sitting down), or for more euros settle over morning *cappuccino* and watch the tourists milling around Piazza del Duomo. If you have deep pockets, enjoy a pasta feast tucked away in the elegant Art Deco rooms on the second floor. ***Piazza del Duomo, 21. ☎ 02 86 46 44 35. www.caffemiani.it. Entrees 15–40€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 82.***

7 The Best **Nightlife**

Milan Nightlife

10 Corso Como 1
Bar Duomo 2
Bar Jamaica 3
Bar Magenta 4
Blue Note 5
Fashion Café 6
Garden Bar, Enterprise Hotel 7
Hollywood 8
Hotel Bulgari Milano 9
Just Cavalli Café 10
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StraRipa Bar 17
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Via De Cristoforis
Via Melchiorre Gioia
Via della Liberazione
Piazza S. Giochino
Via Vittor Pisani
Bastioni di Porta Nuova
Piazzale Principessa Clotilde
Via Castelfidardo
Via M. Polo
Via G. Galilei
Piazza della Repubblica
REPUBBLICA
Viale Tunisia
Via Antonio Zarotto
Viale Vittorio Veneto
Via Solferino
Via S. Marco
Corso di Porta Nuova
Via A. Appiani
Via della Moscova
Bastioni di Porta Venezia
Via Montebello
Via Ceriana
Via Principe Amedeo
Via Filippo Turati
TURATI
Via Daniele Manin
Giardini Pubblici
Palazzo Dugnani
Museo di Storia Naturale
Via Fatebenefratelli
Pinacoteca di Brera
Museo del Risorgimento
Via del Giardino
Manzoni
Via Senato
Via della Spiga
Via Marina
Via Patestro
Villa Belgiojoso Bonaparte
Orto Botanico
Via Brera
Via Monte di Pietà
Museo Bagatti Valsecchi
Palazzo Senato
Corso Venezia
Via Cappuccini
Viale Luigi Majno
Viale Piave
Piazza Fratelli Bandiera
Via Vivaio
Via Carlo Goldoni
MONTE NAPOLEONE
Via Alessandro Manzoni
Via Monte Napoleone
Palazzo Serbelloni
Museo di Milano
S. Damiano
Via
Prefettura
Corso Concordia
Piazza Risorgimento
Teatro alla Scala
Piazza F. L. Meda
Municipio
S. BABILA
Corso Monforte
Via Macedonio Melloni
Piazza S. Babila
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II
Via Vittorio Emanuele
Via Pietro Mascagni
Viale Bianca Maria
Viale Premuda
Via P. Sottocomo
Via Archimede
Via Durini
Via Cenva
Via Passione
Corso Europa
Liberto Visconti di Modrone
Via Gaetano Donizetti
Piazza Duomo
Duomo
DUOMO
Palazzo Arcivescovile
Palazzo Reale
Largo Augusto
Via Filippo Corridoni
Via Marcona
Piazza Cinque Giornate
Piazza S. Pietro in Gessate
Corso Porta Vittoria
Corso Ventidue Marzo
S. Stefano
Via Fontana
Via Podgora
Via E. Besana
Via Augusto Anfossi
Piazza G. Missori
Via Larga
Via G. Mazzini
Via d. Guastalla
Sforza
Palazzo di Giustizia
MISSORI
Torre Velasca
Università degli Studi
Largo F. Richini
Via S. Barnaba
Rotonda della Besana
Via Spartaco
Via Foggazzaro
Via Monte Nero
Via Andrea Maffei
Via Morosini
Via Bergamo
Via E. Mayer
Corso Italia
Corso di Porta Romana
Via Francesco
S. Nazaro
Via Manfredo Fanti
Viale Regina Margherita
Via Pace
Via d. Commenda
S. Eufemia
Via S. Sofia
Via Alfonso Lamarmora
CROCETTA
Piazza A. Ferrari
Via G. Mercalli
Via Orti
Viale Lazio
Viale Emilio Caldara
Via Monte Nero
Via Carlo Botta
Via Pier Lombardo
Vasari
Piazzale Libia
Via Quadronno
Via Bianca di Savoia
Via S. Martino
Via Carlo Crivelli
Corso di Porta Vigentina
Via Giorgio
Via Tirabochi
Via Sigieri
Via Friuli
Largo Isabella d'Aragona
Viale Beatrice d'Este
Viale A. Filippetti
PORTA ROMANA

Nightlife Best Bets

Hotel Bulgari Milano for Zen-like gardens.

Most **Romantic Bar**
★★★ 10 Corso Como, *Corso Como, 10 (p 97)*

Best for **Letting Your Hair Down**
★★ Plastic, *Viale Umbria, 120 (p 99)*

Biggest **Dance Club**
★★★ Hollywood, *Corso Como, 15 (p 98)*

Best **Jazz Club**
★★★ Blue Note, *Via Borsieri Pietro, 37 (p 100)*

Best for **Celeb-Spotting**
★★ Just Cavalli Café, *Via Camoens, Parco Sempione (p 98)*

Most **Zen-like Gardens**
★★★ Hotel Bulgari Milano, *Via Fratelli Gabba, 7b (p 98)*

Best for **1980s' Music**
★★ Shocking Club, *Bastioni di Porta Nuova, 12 (p 99)*

Most **Casual Music Venue**
★★★ Scimmie, *Via Ascanio Sforza, 49 (p 100)*

Best **Bar near Fiera Trade Fair Center**
★★ Garden Bar, *Enterprise Hotel, Corso Sempione, 91 (p 98)*

Best **Bar for Relaxing**
★★★ Bar Jamaica, *Via Brera, 32 (p 97)*

Milan Nightlife **A to Z**

Bars

★ **Bar Duomo** CENTRO STORICO Arrive at *aperitivo* time (see p 16) and I guarantee you'll be rewarded with a massive plate of nibbles (olives stuffed with garlic, chilis, gherkins, and potato chips) to counteract the shock of the price of your *birra* or *espresso*. And where else would you have magnificent Duomo views? ***Piazza Duomo, 17. ☎ 02 89 07 09 14. Metro: Lines 1 or 3 to Duomo. Map p 94.***

★★ **Bar Jamaica** BRERA Cramped and a bit dusty around the edges, this historic bar has been going strong since 1921; it was a haunt of Milan's literati in the 1950s and hosts photography and art exhibitions. It's also one of the few places in Brera where you can easily blend into the background and relax over a cold beer or glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine). ***Via Brera, 32. ☎ 02 876 723. www.jamaicabar.it. Metro: Line 2 to Montenapoleone. Map p 94.***

★★ **Bar Magenta** CORSO MAGENTA Brave the throngs of students who take over the pavement tables in the early evening for a savory spread accompanied by sangria or a glass of Heineken. Order and pay first at the kiosk on the right, before getting in line for your drinks. Despite the elegant Liberty (Italian art nouveau) interior, this place is boisterous and casual in vibe. ***Via Carducci, 13. ☎ 02 80 53 808. www.barmagenta.it. Metro: Lines 1 or 2 to Cadorna Triennale. Map p 94.***

★★ **StraRipa Bar** NAVIGLI Space is tight and things get noisy with DJs playing in the back room and relaxed jazz jamming sessions most Thursday evenings. There is a short wine list, but it's best to pick from a range of colorful cocktails and beers; in summer sit outside and watch the stragglers wandering home. ***Ripa di Porta Ticinese, 19. ☎ 02 58 11 50 21. www.straripabar.com. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 94.***

★★ **Tabou** NAVIGLI A great menu of fruity cocktails and plates of stuffed olives, potato chips, and local cheeses makes this laid-back canalside bar the ideal pit stop for an early evening *aperitivo*. In summer sit outside to watch the nightly Italian stroll or *passeggiata*; later dance to Euro-pop classics in the rustic bar. ***Alzaia Naviglio Grande, 62. ☎ 02 83 23 855. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 94.***

Designer Bars

★★★ **10 Corso Como** PORTA GARIBALDI Carla Sozzani's (see p 113) trendy café continues to draw in crowds after 10 years. Take

Bar Magenta.

StraRipa Bar.

a wrought-iron seat in the charming, vine-covered palazzo courtyard or inside in the extravagantly decorated black-and-white café for a late-night peach bellini cocktail and spot the models, actors, and politicians relaxing in the tranquil atmosphere. ***Corso Como, 10. ☎ 02 29 00 26 74. www.10corsocomo.com. Metro: Line 2 to Piazza Garibaldi. Map p 94.***

★★ Fashion Café BRERA In an enticing piazza opposite the church of San Marco and firmly on the nightly bar-crawl circuit, this sleek bar has a 1950s' feel, designed in wood with low-slung sofas and a bar boasting every liqueur under the sun. It's jumping at *aperitivo* time, which sees a choice of traditional olives and pasta and occasionally sushi. Late night sees dancing to big-name local DJs. ***Via San Marco, 1. ☎ 02 65 72 021. www.fashioncafe.it. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera or Line 3 to Turati. Map p 94.***

★★ Garden Bar, Enterprise Hotel CORSO SEMPIONE Mix with a fashionable crew for the in-demand Happy Hour, on Thursday, at the Enterprise Hotel (see p 115) when there are art and fashion shows or wine tastings to provide a distraction from the martinis and cold buffet. The bar is a convenient stop-off after a hard day's selling at the nearby Fiera Trade Fair Center. ***Enterprise Hotel, Corso Sempione, 91. ☎ 02 318 181. www.enterprisehotel.com. Bus: 1, 11, 19, 43, 48, 57, 78. Map p 94.***

★★ Hotel Bulgari Milano BRERA Climb into your glad rags and killer heels and head down to the sleek Bulgari to mingle with sport stars and political movers in Milan's hottest glamour spot. Perch at the cool, dark bar or grab a hot seat on the low sofas outside to enjoy exotic cocktails in the softly lit, Balinese-influenced gardens. Try the bar's specialty Bulgari cocktail, a delicious mix of gin, local Aperol, orange juice, and lime. ***Via Fratelli Gabba, 7b. ☎ 02 80 58 051. www.bulgarihotels.com. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 94.***

★★ Just Cavalli Café PARCO SEMPIONE Look your best for the strict entry policy enforced at designer Roberto Cavalli's opulent, glittering zinc and leopard-skin bar at the foot of the Torre Branca (see p 77, bullet 1). In winter the style cognoscenti meet over exotic cocktails and early evening nibbles, in summer they recline outside among the oak trees of Milan's largest park, Parco Sempione (see p 77, bullet 2) to the chillout sounds of DJ Motti. ***Via Camoens, Parco Sempione. ☎ 02 311 817. www.justcavallicafe.com. Metro: Lines 1 or 2 to Cadorna. Map p 94.***

Clubs

★ Hollywood PORTO GARIBALDI Milan's most notorious nightclub is a spectacular hang out, with models, B-list celebs, and soccer players taking to the monochrome dance floor spangled with 1980s-style disco lights. Appearances are paramount; designer outfits and bored expressions are almost a condition

of entry, while the music is mainstream R&B and soul, with hip-hop on Thursdays. ***Corso Como, 15. ☎ 02 65 98 996. www.discoteca hollywood.it. Closed end July–Sep. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Garibaldi. Map p 94.***

★★★ **Karma** GAMBOLOITA Southeast of the city, the summer weekend incarnation of mega-club Borgo del Tempo Perso provides chilled music from salsa to house. The five dance floors, bars, restaurant, and floodlit gardens are crammed with the young, wealthy, and beautiful of the city. A new winter club, Karma Diamond, kicks off the festive period. Dress up or you won't get past the bouncers. ***Via Fabio Massimo, 36. ☎ 02 56 94 755. www.borgodeltempoperso.net. Metro: Line 3 to Porto di Mare. Map p 94.***

★★ **Plastic** PORTA VITTORIA Surprisingly off the wall for Milan, Plastic plays host to all persuasions, straight, gay, or transsexual as well as the deeply eccentric. DJs play jungle, house, and retro Euro-pop on the two dance floors, swathed in mirrors and candelabras, and at Saturday night's baroque House of Bordello, glitzy transvestites take to the mic to belt out old classics. ***Viale Umbria, 120. ☎ 02 733 996. www.thisisplastic.com. Metro: Line 3 to Lodi Tibb. Map p 94.***

★★ **Shocking Club** PORTA GARIBALDI There's nothing too shocking about this wonderfully 1980s club with two cavernous floors of minimalist gray décor enlivened with splashes of magenta and lime green. The two bars are full of beautiful young media babes. Resident DJs play 1980s' revival music alongside house, with hip-hop on Friday. Guest DJs play from time to time. ***Bastioni di Porta Nuova, 12. ☎ 02 62 96 00 45. www.shocking club.net. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova or Porta Garibaldi. Map p 94.***

Gay Milan

★★ **Popstarz & Tea Dance at Gasoline** PORTA GARIBALDI Thursday night sees an uninhibited mixed crowd going wild to Euro-pop and electro spun by resident DJs Nancy Posh and Stargazer. The boys-only Sunday afternoon tea dance with a difference leads to lots of posing in sunglasses and underwear to pop hits of the 1980s. ***Via Bonnet, 11A. ☎ 02 29 01 32 45. www.discogasoline.it/popstarz; www.teadance.it. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Garibaldi. Map p 94.***

★ **Sottomarino Giallo** PORTO VENEZIA The 'Yellow Submarine' lets in a mixed crowd during the week but it's strictly women-only at the weekend. There's a snug bar and lounge area on the ground

Dress Policy

Even going shopping in Milan warrants dressing up; the art of looking beautiful, or *bella figura*, features largely in a city where glossy appearances are all. Look smart to go clubbing in the city center, where door policies can be discriminating. The clubs and bars around the Navigli are more casual in style. Clubs get going late; get there after midnight, and bear in mind that the Milanese dislike drunkenness.

Where to Go

The concentration of bars and nightclubs in Italy's party capital is around Navigli and the Porta Garibaldi side of Brera. To get up to speed with the coolest DJs, look for ***Hello Milano***, a monthly English-language listings magazine that gives details of what's on; source it online at www.hellomilano.it. An online source of current nightlife news is found at http://milano.tonight.eu. Gay and lesbian visitors should check www.gaymilan.com for events and clubs.

floor, where salsa and Latino music is played, and downstairs a disco where 30 resident DJs take turns to get everybody dancing to contemporary pop hits. ***Via Donatello, 2. ☎ 02 54 54 127. www.sottomarinogiallo.it. Metro: Line 1 to Lima or Line 2 to Piola. Map p 94.***

Live Music

★★★ **Blue Note** PORTA GARIBALDI Top-caliber musicians play rhythm and blues, Latino beats, gospel, and contemporary jazz. There's seating for 400, a relaxed atmosphere, and twice-nightly shows from big names in international jazz—Chick Corea and saxophonist Pee Wee Ellis are recent performers. Eat here before the concert; the best dishes include pumpkin tortellini and duck breast slathered in honey. ***Via Borsieri Pietro, 37. ☎ 02 69 01 68 88. www.bluenotemilano.com. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Garibaldi or Line 3 to Zara. Map p 94.***

★★★ **Scimmie** NAVIGLI Scimmie is refreshingly down to earth. Nightly music sessions range from jazz to acoustic guitar, reggae, and world music, plus the odd stand-up comedy in English. Jazz act Mingus Amungus and Katie Melua are among the eclectic bunch who play here. The barge moored alongside has a cocktail bar. ***Via Ascanio Sforza, 49. ☎ 02 89 40 28 74. www.scimmie.it. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova. Map p 94.***

Blue Note.

8 The Best **Arts & Entertainment**

Milan Arts & Entertainment

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Autodromo Nazionale Monza 3
Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi 4
Idropark Fila 5
Mediolanum Forum 6
Palasharp 7
Piccolo Teatro di Milano 8
Stadio San Siro 9
Teatro alla Scala 10
Teatro Dal Verme 11
Teatro degli Arcimboldi di Milano 12
Teatro del Buratto al Pime 13
Teatro Manzoni 14
Teatro Ventaglio Smeraldo 15
Parco Nord
Via Aldo Moro
Via Luigi Ornato
Viale Barbera
NIGUARDA
BICOCCA
Viale Fulvio Testi
Viale Monza
Viale Zara
MONTALBINO
Viale Marche
Via Palma
Viale Brianza
Stazione Centrale F.S.
Corso Buenos Aires
Viale Abruzzi
LAMBRATE
Città degli Studi
REDECESIO
Tangenziale Est
Giardini Pubblici
Castello Sforzesco
Viale Romagna
Viale Piceno
Duomo
Corso 22 Marzo
Viale Corsica
Viale Enrico Forlanini
MILANO
Viale Molise
Via Mecenate
A51
Viale Beatrice d'Este
Viale Umbria
TALIEDO
LINATE
Aeroporto Linate
Viale Toscana
Corso Lodi
Via Giuseppe Ripamonti
MONVIONE
Tangenziale Est
Autostrada del Sole
VIGENTINO
Strada Statale Paullese
Via Virgilio Ferrari
ROGOREDO
Via Emilia
SAN DONATO
Via Giuseppe Ripamonti
Via Roma
QUINTOSOLE
Autostrada del Sole
POASCO

Arts & Entertainment Best Bets

The famous opera house La Scala.

Most **Famous Opera House**
★★★ Teatro alla Scala, *Piazza della Scala (p 106)*

Best for **Family Musicals**
★★ Teatro Ventaglio Smeraldo, *Piazza XXV Aprile, 10 (p 106)*

Best **Live-Music Venue**
★★★ Stadio San Siro, *Via Piccolomini, 5 (p 107)*

Best **Alternative Moviehouse**
★★ Anteospazio Cinema, *Via Milazzo, 9 (p 107)*

Best for **a Splashing Day Out**
★★★ Aquatica, *Via Gaetano Airaghi, 61 (p 108)*

Best **Acoustics in an Old Building**
★★ Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, *Via Conservatorio, 12 (p 105)*

Most **Hallowed Football Ground**
★★★ Stadio San Siro, *Via Piccolomini, 5 (p 107)*

Best for **Sporting Family Fun**
★★★ Idropark Fila, *Via Circonvallazione Idroscalo, 29 (p 108)*

Noisiest **Venue to Test Driving Skills**
★★★ Autodromo Nazionale Monza, *Via Vedano, 5 (p 106)*

Arts & Entertainment **A to Z**

Children's Entertainment

★★ kids Teatro del Buratto al Pime PIAZZALE LORENZO LOTTO Stage shows for youngsters with colorful marionettes telling clever tales and fables. Performances are full of music, laughter, and dazzling lighting effects. It's ten minutes north of the city center by metro. ***Via Mosè Bianchi, 94. ☎ 02 27 00 24 76. www.teatrodelburatto.it. Tickets: 5–10€. Oct–Mar. Metro: Line 1 to Lotto. Map p 102.***

Classical Music

★★ Auditorium di Milano NAVIGLI This much-loved venue opened in 1999 on the site of an old cinema built in 1939. It's home to the acclaimed Orchestra Sinfonica and prized for its superb acoustics; the tiered auditorium seats 1,400. Thursday and Friday see chamber, symphony, and choral concerts. ***Corso San Gottardo, 39. ☎ 02 833 891. www.auditoriumdimilano.org. Tickets 15–50€. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Genova, or Tram 3 stops outside. Map p 102.***

★★★ Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi CENTRO STORICO In an elegant baroque church, Milan's college of music was established in 1807. Chamber concerts are in the Sala Puccini, and the Orchestra Sinfonica del Conservatorio plays choral and symphonic works in the grand Sala Verdi. You can also peek at the rare scores by Mozart and Verdi in the library (free entry). ***Via Conservatorio, 12. ☎ 02 76 21 101. www.consmilano.it. Tickets 20–25€. Metro: Line 1 to San Babilia. Map p 102.***

★★ Teatro Dal Verme CENTRO STORICO Opened in 2001, this has the happy combination of an elegant Liberty (Italian art nouveau) exterior, state-of-the-art acoustics, and four modern auditoriums. The Saturday matinee symphony concerts, *Pomeriggi Musicali*, are held under the direction of in-house conductor Antonello Manacorda. Visiting orchestras and the odd rock star also perform here—David Byrne played in early 2009. ***Via San Giovanni sul Muro, 2. ☎ 02 87 90 52 01. www.dalverme.org. Tickets 20–150€. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 102.***

★ Teatro degli Arcimboldi di Milano BICOCCA Out in the boondocks northeast of the city center, Arcimboldi was best known as the temporary home of La Scala (see p 106). Housed in a remodeled Pirelli factory, the 2,400-seat auditorium hosts classical concerts and ballet performances as well as gigs by the likes of Tom Waits, Il Divo, and Dave Gilmour. ***Viale dell'Innovazione, 20. ☎ 02 64 11 42 212. Tickets 20–70€. www.teatroarcimboldi.it. Metro: Line 1 to Precotto and shuttle bus. Map p 102.***

Teatro degli Arcimboldi di Milano.

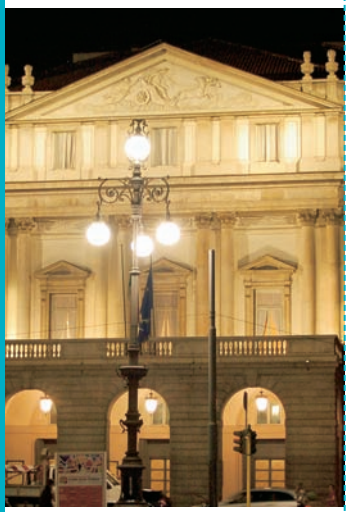
What's On

For the latest listings, pick up monthly Milanomese, a guide to all entertainment in Milan, written in Italian and English and with a metro map in the middle. ***Le Voci della Città*** produces annual listings of church concerts, again printed in Italian and English. Both are free from hotels, bars, and cafés and the tourist offices (see p 158). The English website **milan.angloinfo.com** is written for expats living there but provides useful, up-to-date information on events in the city, and www.ciaomilano.it has information specifically aimed at visitors.

Dance

★★ **Teatro Ventaglio Smeraldo** BRERA Milan's largest theater seats 2,100 and mainly features ballet favorites as well as contemporary dance from young companies. Mainstream musicals such as *West Side Story* and *Evita* also play here, providing all-round family entertainment. ***Piazza XXV Aprile, 10. ☎ 02 29 00 67 67. www.smeraldo.it. Tickets 10–35€. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova or Porta Garibaldi. Map p 102.***

Teatro alla Scala.



Formula One

★★★ **Autodromo Nazionale Monza** MONZA Fancy being a racing driver for a day? Take up the challenge at the home of the Italian Grand Prix. Since its inception in 1922, the 10km track has undergone many facelifts; it's now open to the public who can practice their speed skills on motorbikes, in cars, or even on cycles. The Formula One Grand Prix race is usually run in September in front of hundreds of thousands of fans. ***Via Vedano, 5. ☎ 248 21. www.monzanet.it. Ticket prices vary. Train: Porta Garibaldi FS blue line to Monza. Map p 102.***

Opera

★★★ **Teatro alla Scala** CENTRO STORICO The world's favorite opera house reopened to great fanfare in 2004 after three years of restoration. Today it is all sumptuous red velvet and gilding, dressed up in all its new finery and finding its feet after years of infighting among the directors. Tickets for one of the exquisite operas and ballets (there's also a ballet school here) are like gold dust, so book well before the season kicks off on 7th December, when wealthy Milanese come out to impress dripping in jewels and furs. The program for 2009 includes *Giselle* and *The Rake's Progress*.

Next door the museum showcases the opera house's history (see p 13, bullet 2). ***Piazza della Scala. ☎ 02 72 00 37 44. www.teatroalla scala.org. Tickets 12–187€ (more for opening nights). Metro: Line 1 to Duomo or Cordusio. Map p 102.***

Rock Venues

★ **Mediolanum Forum** FAMAGOSTA Get there early to bag your seat in the unnumbered auditorium for major-league bands–Oasis, The Killers, and The Eagles are lined up to play in 2009, along with perennial Italian favorite, songstress Laura Pausini. It can be a struggle to get here, 3km south of the city on the Genova autostrada. ***Via G Di Vittorio, 6. ☎ 199 12 88 00. www.forumnet.it. Tickets 15–55€. Metro: Line 2 to Famagosta, then ATM shuttle bus. Map p 102.***

★★ **Palasharp** LAMPUGNANO The 9,000-seater indoor stadium hosts major concerts and sporting events; retro bands Judas Priest and Lynyrd Skynyrd both play here in 2009. Family fun in the shape of equestrian events, top musicals, and *Disney on Ice* fill the stadium over holiday periods. ***Via Sant'Elia, 33. ☎ 02 33 40 05 51. Tickets 20–150€. palasharp.gruppotogni.it. Metro: Line 1 to Lampugnano. Map p 102.***

★★★ **Stadio San Siro** SAN SIRO Milan's famous soccer stadium is also its major rock venue and has attracted big-name acts including Feeder, Bruce Springsteen, and Robbie Williams. ***For details see Soccer.***

Soccer

★★★ **Stadio San Siro** SAN SIRO With soccer worshipped along with food and fashion, Milan is famous as the home of rival Serie A teams AC Milan and FC Internazionale Milan, who play on alternate Sundays at San Siro. At 5½ km northwest of the city center, this mega-stadium began life in the 1920s and saw 45 million euros spent on an upgrade for the 1990 World Cup. With a capacity of 86,000 in covered seating, the stadium has a retractable roof. For ticket information, see www.acmilan.com and www.inter.it.

Movies in Milan

Predictably most films shown in Milan are in Italian, but there is an English-language movie showing at a different cinema most days. To find films in English, look for 'VO' (versione originale) by the listing. The website www.lombardiaspettacolo.com documents new releases. The 10-screen **Odeon Cinema 5** (Via Santa Redegonda, ☎ 02 86 95 03 22) offers mainstream original-languages movies, whereas **Arcobaleno Film Center** (Viale Tunisia 11, ☎ 02 29 40 60 54) specializes in international films, with English titles on Tuesdays. The following have VO films weekly: *Monday:* **Cinema Anteo** (Via Milazzo 9, ☎ 02 65 97 732); *Thursday:* **Cinema Mexico** (Via Savona 57, ☎ 02 48 95 18 02)—*The Rocky Horror Show* runs here every Friday, when the audience dresses up and sings along to the cult tunes. For art-house movies, head for the three screens at **Anteospazio Cinema** (Via Milazzo, 9, ☎ 02 65 97 732).

Piccolo Teatro di Milano.

As well as league games, national and European matches are played. *Via Piccolomini, 5. ☎ 02 40 42 432. www.sansirotour.com. Tickets 20–150€. Metro: Line 1 to Molino Dorino. Map p 102.*

Theater

★★ Piccolo Teatro di Milano BRERA This is the umbrella company of three theaters: Strehler (Largo Greppi, 1), Grassi (Via Rovello, 2), and Studio (Via Rivoli, 6). Stages hard-hitting productions of Shakespeare and contemporary drama, occasionally in English. *Largo Paolo Grassi, 2. ☎ 02 42 41 18 89. www.piccoloteatro.org. Ticket prices vary. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera. Map p 102.*

★★ Teatro Manzoni QUAD D'ORO Theater-light featuring gentle farces and comedy often played by Italian soap stars. *Via Manzoni, 42. ☎ 02 76 36 901. www.teatromanzoni.it. Tickets 15–30€. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 102.*

Watersports

★★★ kids Aquatica QUINTO ROMANO Kamikaze slides, wave pool, toddlers' pool, and a supervised baby club are just the thing to restore good humor to fractious youngsters while you dawdle along the Lazy River. *Via Gaetano Airaghi, 61. ☎ 02 48 20 01 34. Tickets: 15€. June–Sept. Metro: Line 1 to De Angeli then bus 72. Map p 102.*

★★★ kids Idropark Fila LINATE Between May and September, this 2.5km long artificial lake and its park offers swimming, boating, wind surfing, blading, climbing, fishing, and sunbathing, plus an adventure playground for toddlers. There are open-air concerts in summer too. *Via Circonvallazione Idroscalo, 29. ☎ 02 70 20 09 02. Train: Stazione Centrale to Piazza Duca d'Aosta. Map p 102.*

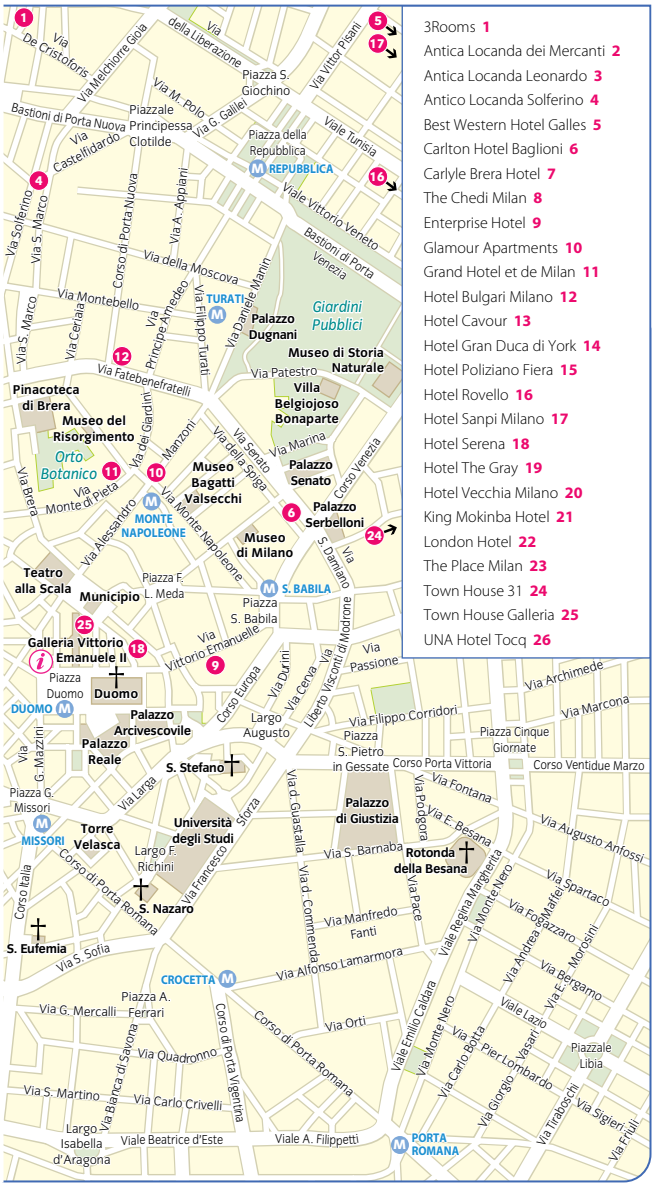
Ticket Deals

Tickex (www.tickex.com) and ViaGoGo (www.viagogo.co.uk) handle tickets for pop concerts; the websites are in English. **Seatwave** (www.seatwave.com) sells tickets to major events and venues. For performances at La Scala, apply to the website well in advance (www.teatroallascala.org) or visit the ticket office when you are in Milan. Don't buy from the ticket touts outside the theater; their prices are a rip off. Bigger venues discount unsold tickets towards the end of the day; go to the ticket office or call individual booking lines for details.

9 The Best **Lodging**

Milan **Lodging**

Previous page: View from Glamour Apartments.



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Lodging **Best Bets**

Town House Galleria.

Best **Budget Hotel**
★★ Hotel Vecchia Milano $$ *Via Borromei, 4 (p 117)*

Best **Hotel with Balinese Zen Spa**
★★★ Hotel Bulgari Milano $$$$$ *Via Fratelli Gabba, 7b (p 116)*

Best **Family Hotel**
★★★ Antica Locanda dei Mercanti $$$$ *Via San Tomaso, 83 (p 113)*

Best for **Fashion Bunnies**
★★★ Enterprise Hotel $$$$ *Corso Sempione, 93 (p 115)*

Best for **Business**
★★ Hotel Poliziano Fiera $$$ *Via Angelo Poliziano, 11 (p 116)*

Most **Romantic Hotel**
★★★ Town House Galleria $$$$$ *Via Pellico Silvio, 8 (p 119)*

Best for **Old-World Charm**
★★★ Grand Hotel et de Milan $$$$$ *Via Manzoni, 29 (p 116)*

Best **Self-Catering**
★★★ The Place Milan $$$$ *Via Broletto, 31 (p 118)*

Prettiest **Terrace**
★★ Hotel Gran Duca di York $$$ *Via Moneta, 18 (p 116)*

Best for **Asian Style**
★★★ The Chedi Milan $$$$$ *Via Villapizzone, 24 (p 115)*

Best for **Shopping Trips**
★★★ 3Rooms $$$$ *Corso Como, 10 (p 113)*

Best **Hotel Restaurant**
★★★ Carlton Hotel Baglioni $$$$ *Via Senato, 5 (p 114)*

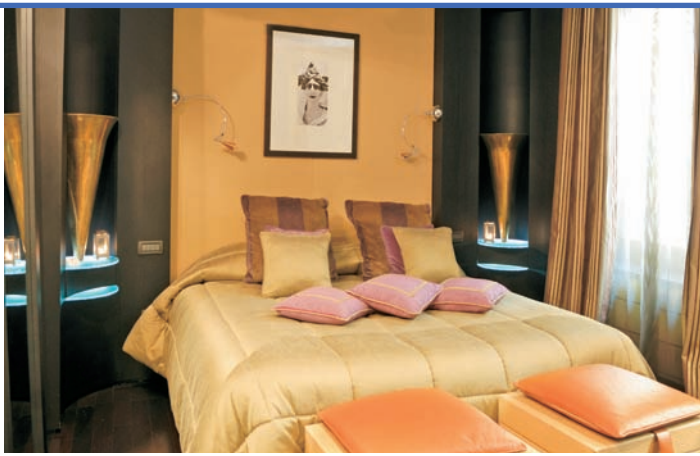
Milan Lodging **A to Z**

★★★ **3Rooms** PORTA GARIBALDI Another element of ex-model Carla Sozzani's burgeoning empire, 3Rooms sits behind Milan's most fabulous shop, 10 Corso Como (see p 97), and welcomes supermodels, rock stars, and politicians through its hallowed portals. Decorated in monochrome with designer pieces scattered around (Andrew Eames chairs and the Porsche kitchen equipment are all for sale), the world's most expensive B&B pitches guests straight into designer-land; there is no bar or restaurant, so breakfast can be taken at 10 Corso Como's dinky café (see p 97). ***Corso Como, 10. ☎ 02 626 163. www.3rooms-10corsocomo.com. 3 units. Doubles 310€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Piazza Garibaldi. Map p 110.***

★★★ kids **Antica Locanda dei Mercanti** CENTRO STORICO My favorite Milanese hotel by miles; you'll get a warm welcome in your new home-from-home. With a light-filled open foyer (with WiFi access), the Mercanti's rooms are on several floors off a tiny courtyard. Each room is individually furnished, and eccentric works of art dot the walls. A series of rooms on the third floor can be made into a spacious family suite. Breakfast is served in your room; order the night before for pastries, fruit, hot chocolate, and milky *cappuccino*. It's right in the heart of the action, too, just off Via Dante. ***Via San Tomaso, 8. ☎ 02 80 54 080. www.locanda.it. 10 units. Doubles 175–275€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 110.***

★ **Antica Locanda Leonardo** CORSO MAGENTA With the smallest of signs to signal its presence, the family-run Locanda Leonardo sits round a leafy courtyard, perfect for summer evenings and overlooked by the tiny balconies of the rooms above. Styled mainly in blues and creams, the rooms range from period to modern in design, and, along with the common spaces, are beginning to show their age. There is

Antico Locanda Solferino.



Carlton Hotel Baglioni.

no restaurant, but a breakfast room that becomes a bar in the evening. The hotel is a hop to Santa Maria delle Grazie, where if you are lucky, you'll get the chance to see *The Last Supper* (see p 15). ***Corso Magenta, 78. ☎ 02 48 01 90 12. www.anticalocandaleonardo.com. 20 units. Doubles 135–230€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Conciliazione. Map p 110.***

★★ Antico Locanda Solferino

BRERA An old-fashioned pensione-type hotel with cheery accommodation on the fringes of Brera. With no public spaces, breakfast is served in the bedrooms, which are crammed with Art Nouveau light fittings, prints, and vast antique wardrobes. Recent upgrading has introduced WiFi and cable TV. I discovered that no double-glazing in the rooms overlooking the street makes for a broken night's sleep—be sure to ask for a room at the back. ***Via Castelfidardo, 2. ☎ 02 65 70 129. www.anticalocandasolferino.it. 11 units. Doubles 180–400€ w/breakfast. Metro: Line 2 to Moscova. Map p 110.***

★ Best Western Hotel Galles

PORTA GARIBALDI Right on bustling Corso Buenos Aires, the Galles is squeezed into an old palazzo and some of the rooms, although recently revamped, feel cramped. The bathrooms in particular are tiny, but the excellent power showers make up for the lack of space. The suntrap terrace on the eighth floor has great views over the city and the restaurant, Ristorante La Terrazza (see p 89), serves a quality Italian menu. There's a small (and deserted, when I was there) spa, with sauna and steam room, with free usage to all guests. Good value for its position near the Metro and in the center of the city. ***Piazza Lima, 2. ☎ 02 20 48 433. www.galles.it. 188 units. Doubles 95–175€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Lima. Map p 110.***

★★★ Carlton Hotel Baglioni

QUAD D'ORO Darlings of the luxury hotel market, the Baglioni chain goes from strength to strength. The glossy Milanese outpost of their empire is in the heart of designer-shopping country, with a private entrance onto Via della Spiga. Matching the A-list

clientele, the stuccoed rooms are classically furnished with antiques, swagged curtains, and marble bathrooms, plus all modern conveniences. A Guerlain spa has opened in the lobby and the hotel hosts Ermanno Taschera's Baretto, a local institution that feels somewhat like a Victorian English dining room, serving fine Modern European cuisine. ***Via Senato, 5. ☎ 02 773 331. www.baglionihotels.com. 92 units. Doubles 390–800€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 110.***

★ Carlyle Brera Hotel BRERA The Carlyle caters largely for business travelers but is strategically placed in Brera, making it a reasonable choice for shopaholic visitors as well. There is an air of the 1980s about the interior; the lobby resembles an airport lounge, with blue and gray chairs grouped together around a curved wood reception desk, while the rooms are kitted out with lots of pine and all the facilities you would expect from a four-star hotel (WiFi, mini-bar, TV). The mezzanine restaurant serves typical Italian dishes and there's a lighter menu in the new(ish) Carlyle Restaurant. ***Corso Garibaldi, 84. ☎ 02 29 00 38 88. www.brerahotels.com. 96 units. Doubles 350–400€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Lanza Brera. Map p 110.***

★★★ The Chedi Milan VILLAPIZZONE Ten floors of heavenly luxury introduced GHM Hotels to Europe from Asia in 2007. The Indonesian styling makes this impeccable hotel an oasis of cool colors with low-slung furnishings, spa and pool, fusion cooking in the restaurant, and two softly lit bars in shades of brown and orange. If you're after privacy, join the Chedi Club and watch the hoi polloi pass by from its exclusive balcony. The jewel in the crown is the Penthouse Suite, with private terrace, dining room seating eight, vintage brandies in the mini-bar, and 24-hour butler service. ***Via Villapizzone, 24. ☎ 02 36 31 80 11. www.thechedimilan.com. 250 units. Doubles 228–8918€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Kastrup. Map p 110.***

★★★ Enterprise Hotel CORSO SEMPIONE The cool Enterprise is currently one of the smartest addresses in town, with a buzzing restaurant, Sophia's (see p 91), and two sleek bars including the Garden Bar (see p 98) populated with business travelers from the Fiera Trade Fair, models, and smartly dressed tourists. The rooms are the last word in elegance, decorated in soft greens and browns, some minimalist, some with antique furnishings. Make sure your room is actually in the building, rather than in the ground-level rooms at the back; they overlook a noisy and scruffy courtyard. A couple of luxurious apartments are also tucked behind the hotel. ***Corso Sempione, 93. ☎ 02 318 181. www.enterprisehotel.com. 123 units. Doubles 278–408€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1, 11, 19, 43, 48, 57, 78. Map p 110.***

★★ kids Glamour Apartments CENTRO STORICO/QUAD DORO Ideal for longer stays, four of these superb one-bed apartments are found in a delightful Liberty palazzo along Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, and the fifth on Via del Gesù in the Quad d'Oro. No expense is spared in their decoration (18th-century beds, custom-made sofas, marble bathrooms), and facilities include WiFi and a bespoke butler service to ensure that your every whim is catered for. If you're traveling with children, staff will stock your apartment with their preferred food before your arrival. ***Via Privata Passarella, 4. ☎ 02 89 05 53 48. www.glamourapartments.it. 5 units. Apartments 220–340€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to San Babila. Map p 110.***

★★★ Grand Hotel et de Milan BRERA Milan's most historic hotel positively oozes grandeur. The ornate 18th-century palazzo is laid out in antique style, dotted with palms and baroque statues. Rooms are finished to the highest spec with every conceivable luxury, period furniture, great gilt-framed mirrors, and portraits on the walls. Add two renowned restaurants, a frothily decorated bar, and a well-equipped spa to work off your excesses, and this is almost rarified perfection. *Via Manzoni, 29. ☎ 02 723 141. www.grandhoteletdemilan.it. 95 units. Doubles 455€–1175€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 110.*

★★★ Hotel Bulgari Milano BRERA Laid-back modern style at a price, the Bulgari rooms are furnished by all-Italian designers in shades of white, brown, and black with exquisite marble bathrooms filled with delicious toiletries. The hotel is tucked away behind the Orto Botanico (see p 78, bullet 6) in tranquil gardens but only steps away from the Quad d'Oro and Brera shops. The zen-like spa has a gold-mosaic swimming pool; there's a bar full of beautiful people (see p 98) and an Italian restaurant with views over the lawns. The glorious top-floor suite is Balinese in design; a truly gorgeous but wildly expensive retreat. *Via Fratelli Gabba, 7b. ☎ 02 80 58 051. www.bulgarihotels.com. 52 units. Doubles 490–2100€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Montenapoleone. Map p 110.*

★ Hotel Cavour BRERA Part of the Gallia chain and looking unassuming from its concrete exterior, the Cavour windows are sensibly soundproofed to drown out the street noise. Its fantastic location on the edges of sophisticated Brera is probably the main draw, although the hotel has an elegant Art Deco design, with velvet chairs scattered around the lobby and a sweeping marble staircase. The bedrooms are at the luxury end of functional, but there is an impersonal feel common to many central Milan hotels. *Via Fatebenefratelli, 21. ☎ 02 620 001. www.hotelcavour.it. 113 units. Doubles 140–197€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 3 to Turati. Map p 110.*

★★ Hotel Gran Duca di York CENTRO STORICO As befits a 19th-century Liberty palazzo, the reception area of this hotel on the doorstep of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (see p 53, bullet 1) is decked out in marble, with a splendidly old-fashioned air. The recently upgraded rooms are plainly furnished, with crisp white bedding, modern lighting, and beige striped walls. Four rooms have private terraces overlooking a vine-covered courtyard. *Via Moneta, 1. ☎ 02 874 863. www.ducadiyork.com. 33 units. Doubles 158–188€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 110.*

★★ Hotel Poliziano Fiera CORSO SEMPIONE A 7-minute walk from the Fiera Trade Fair, this is the perfect choice for business travelers who like their hotels spotlessly, if predictably, kitted out. The rooms are surprisingly spacious, the décor is muted, and the marble bathrooms all recently remodeled. Cafè Bistrot Le Cupole has an old-fashioned wooden bar plus a decent menu of pasta and salads, and there's a patio for sunny afternoons. *Via Angelo Poliziano, 11. ☎ 02 31 91 911. www.adihotels.com. 100 units. 84–104€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1, 11, 19, 43, 48, 57, 78. Map p 110.*

★ **Hotel Rovello** CENTRO STORICO At bargain-basement prices by Milan standards, the Rovello offers straightforward lodging in basic, neat rooms, all with en suite bathrooms and TV. A continental breakfast is served in the morning, but it's no great shakes, so explore the maze of streets leading up to Castello Sforzesco to find a bar for your morning coffee. ***Via Rovello, 18. ☎ 02 86 46 46 54. www.hotelrovello.it. 10 units. Doubles 100–185€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 110.***

★★ **Hotel Sanpi Milano** PORTA VENEZIA Filled with Italian-designed contemporary fixtures and fittings, the Sanpi attracts a business crowd plus well-heeled tourists with its spacious (by Milan standards) rooms, many overlooking the flower-filled terraced garden at the rear. Some of the bathrooms have Balinese-style windows onto the bedrooms, and all suites have Jacuzzis to cure aching backs and feet. The bar serves *spuntini* (snacks) all day. ***Via Lazzaro Palazzi, 18. ☎ 02 29 51 33 41. www.hotelsanpimilano.it. 79 units. Doubles 90–400€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Porta Venezia. Map p 110.***

★★★ kids **Hotel Serena** PORTA VENEZIA With simple, plainly-furnished rooms, the Serena has undergone a facelift and makes a great budget choice; the19th-century terrace is just off the shopping drag at Corso Buenos Aires and close to the Metro leading to the Centro Storico. A buffet breakfast of juices, coffee, and pastries is served daily, and the well-stocked wooden bar serves *aperitivi* nightly. ***Via Ruggero Boscovich, 59. ☎ 02 29 40 44 83. www.hotelserenamilan.com. 44 units. Doubles 60–260€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Lima. Map p 110.***

★★★ **Hotel The Gray** CENTRO STORICO This most tasteful of boutique hotels offers supremely chic accommodation, with white linen bedding and headboards set off by bright splashes of color and soft lighting. Bathrooms are all white marble and wood, with round basins and baths, and enormous, fluffy white towels. The Le Noir restaurant serves top-notch Mediterranean food in a space subtly illuminated by purple lighting. ***Via San Raffaele, 6. ☎ 02 72 08 951. www.hotelthegray.com. 23 units. Doubles 246–1900€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 110.***

★★ kids **Hotel Vecchia Milano** CENTRO STORICO Hidden away in a tangle of backstreets, this little gem, tucked behind a narrow entrance, is amazing value for pricey central Milan. If you don't mind basic, I would choose this place over the soulless four-stars in Brera any day. The rooms are minute and getting a bit jaded, but

Hotel The Gray.

spotlessly clean and a stone's throw away from the major sights. Breakfast is not great, but *aperitivi* are served from the tiny wooden bar in early evening. ***Via Borromei, 4. ☎ 02 875 042. www.hotelvecchiamilan.com. 27 units. Doubles 80€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 110.***

★ King Mokinba Hotel CORSO MAGENTA Very central and full of elongated models when the fashion shows are on, the King is the flagship in the Mokinba portfolio of Italian hotels. For such a trendy and expensive address, the rooms are surprisingly traditional, with brocade curtains and bedspreads, and functional bathrooms. Ask for a room at the back to escape the traffic din of Corso Magenta. ***Corso Magenta, 19. ☎ 02 874 432. www.hotelkingmilano.com. 48 units. Doubles 60–480€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 2 to Cadorna. Map p 110.***

★★ London Hotel CENTRO STORICO On a prime spot on a backwater street, a ten-minute walk from the Duomo, the London provides a just-more-than-basic service for an excellent price. The rooms are simple but bright and there's a traditional wooden bar off the ancient muddy-green reception area that serves a top continental breakfast in the morning. Bag one of the second-story rooms, as they are bigger than those on higher floors. ***Via Rovello, 3. ☎ 02 72 02 01 66. www.albergo-hotel-london-milano.it. 29 units. Doubles 130–170€. MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 110.***

★★★ kids The Place Milan BRERA/CENTRO STORICO Luxurious apartments for rental periods of up to one month, mostly with one double bedroom, although an extra room can be added on to the Exclusive Suite. Convenient for shopping and dining as well as work in the

Elegant apartment, The Place Milan.

Candle-lit garden at Town House 31.

business district around Corso Magenta, the apartments come with daily maid service, cable, phones, and WiFi as well as immaculate designer-standard kitchens and bathrooms. Book the Golden Suite in Via Fiori Chiari for the height of sophistication in soft beiges and taupes and a golden resin floor. Spectacular. ***Via Broletto, 31. ☎ 02 76 02 66 33. www.the-place.it. 6 units. Apartments 150–660€. AE, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Cairoli. Map p 110.***

★★ Town House 31 PORTA VENEZIA With an emphasis on comfortable luxury, this small hotel offers modern rooms decorated in soft creams, state-of-the-art bathrooms, a mammoth breakfast buffet, and evening *aperitivi* in the informal Garden Bar. The unique selling point is the service; it's run by polite and informed staff in a city occasionally known for its lack of courtesy. ***Via Goldoni, 31. ☎ 02 701 56. www.townhouse.it. 19 units. Doubles 173–192€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 1 to Palestra. Map p 110.***

★★★ Town House Galleria CENTRO STORICO Setting new standards of opulence in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (see p 8, bullet 3), the magical Town House opened in 2007 and is now regarded as one of the world's leading hotels. Yes it's breathtakingly costly, but where else in Milan do you get your own 24-hour butler, a view over the galleria, soft furnishings by leading contemporary designers, three TVs, a laptop, impeccable service, and in–room dining on demand? Quality nouvelle cuisine dishes are served in La Sinfonia restaurant, backed by one of the city's best wine lists. ***Via Pellico Silvio, 8. ☎ 02 89 05 82 97. www.townhousegalleria.it. 15 units. Doubles 1,000–10,700€. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Lines 1 and 3 to Duomo. Map p 110.***

Town House Galleria.

★★★ **UNA Hotel Tocq** PORTA GARIBALDI With a minimalist interior designed by Italian architect Aldo Cibic, this is one of six slick UNA hotels in Milan. Rooms are decorated in creams, with blue or purple carpets adding color; bathrooms are on the tiny side. Thirteen light, airy apartments have a minimum stay of seven days and are serviced daily; guests have full use of the hotel's facilities. A patio opens up in the summer and every Sunday an English-style brunch is served in the UNA Restaurant. Book online for massive savings. ***Via A De Tocqueville, 7d. ☎ 02 620 71. www.unahotels.it. 109 units, plus 13 apartments. Doubles 119–350€ w/ breakfast; apartments 3250–4600€ monthly. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Line 2 to Porta Garibaldi. Map p 110.*** ●

Staying in Milan & Lombardy

As a major commercial center, many of Milan's hotels are totally business orientated, making them impersonal and not always conducive to family holidays. Luckily this is being addressed, with the advent of small, privately owned hotels (locandas) geared specifically towards the tourist. Recent years have also seen the rise of mega-cool boutique hotels to complement the grand old institutions. Hotels are graded from 1–5 stars and priced accordingly. All hotels add an IVA tax of 20 per cent on to the room charge, but not to food or drink bills. Prices are often higher during the week (again due to the preponderance of business travelers) so consider looking at weekend breaks, and avoid late February and late September, when the fashion shows hit and there are no spare beds in town. Check the hotels' websites for great deals throughout the year.

10 The Lakes: **Como & Maggiore**

Como & Maggiore

Bellinzona
Monte Marmontana 2316m
Monte Duria 2264m
SWITZERLAND
Gera Lario
Domaso
A. del Tiglio
Gravedona
Cólico
Monte Bar 1816m
Dongo
Abbazia di Piona
Musso
Monte Bregagno 2107m
Calozzo
Dorio
36
340d
Dervio
Sonvico
Carlazzo
Lago di Como
Porlezza
Bellano
Casargo
S. Mamete
Menaggio
Gandria
Lago di Lugano
Osteno
Varenna
Lugano
Monte di Lenno 1589m
Tremezzo
Bellagio
Esino Lario
Caprino
Lenno
PARCO REG. DELLE GRIGNE
Campione d'Italia
S. Fedele Intelvi
Monte Generoso 1701m
Colonno
583
Lierna
Grigna Settentrionale 2409m
Argegno
Lezzeno
Maroggia
340
Oliveto
Nesso
Lago di Lecco
Mandello del Lário
Brienno
Monte S. Primo 1686m
Riva S. Vitale
Abbadia Lariana
ITALY
Monte Bisbino 1325m
583
36
Lecco
Mendrisio
Torno
Asso
Monte Palanzone 1436m
Cernobbio
Chiasso
Pusiano
Lago di Garlate
Gaggino
Erba
Lago di Annone
Como
639
Lago di Alserio
Lago di Pusiano
Oggiono
Olgiate Comasco
Albate
Alserio
PARCO REGIONALE DELLA VALLE DEL LAMBRO
Campsirago
Casnate
342
Cantù
36
PARCO REGIONALE DELLA PINETA DI APPIANO GENTILE E TRADATE
Arosio
Mariano Comense
Lomazzo
35
Carate Brianza
A9
Meda
Seregno
Sevesco
Saronno
Skiing
Mountain
36 Road Number
Country Border
0
5 mi
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5 km
N

Around Como Town

Sitting on the southwestern tip of Lake Como, the city of Como is essentially a center of commerce. The city started life as a Roman settlement in the 2nd-century AD and had a typically checkered history before coming under Milanese rule in the 14th century. Since then silk production has thrived here, with Como supplying around 60 per cent of Europe's luxury market. Not that much of this impinges on tourists who come for its ancient heritage, fine churches, and lake views. This is a short walk around the town ending with fabulous views over the lake. **START: Piazza Duomo.**

1 ★★★ Duomo. Como's extravagantly self-important Duomo is found by following Via Plinio straight out of Piazza Cavour. Almost 400 years in the making from 1396 to 1744, this vast domed building has a 13th-century three-colored striped-marble town hall, known as the Broletto, grafted onto its north side, its arches abutting a Romanesque tower. The Duomo combines Gothic and Renaissance architecture for two very different façades; long, narrow windows and a stained-glass rose window mark the western end, with a seamless apse plus a baroque dome added by architect and stage designer Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736) and added after his death in 1744 at the eastern end. Inside the contrast in styles is just as clear; the three Gothic aisles sit happily alongside a Renaissance choir. To add to the architectural soup, two Romanesque lions pose proudly outside the church, remnants of the original basilica on the site. ***45 min. Piazza Duomo. 031 265 264. Admission free. Daily 7.30am–12pm, 2.30–7pm.***

Cathedral (Duomo), Como.

2 ★ Palazzo Terragni. Leave the Duomo and turn left and left again into Piazza Verdi for views straight ahead of the ex-fascist headquarters, just outside the city walls and prosaically now civic offices. The building was designed by Fascist architect Giuseppe Terragni in 1932–36, and has a plain, simple structure. It's heralded as a masterpiece of contemporary architecture but you can't go in; content yourself with squinting at it from across the road. ***5 min. Piazza del Populo.***

3 ★★★ kids Da Pietro. For lunch, retire to one of the canopied bars opposite the Duomo in its cobbled piazza. All prices and menus are similar (pasta and pizza in all guises), although Da Pietro has the edge for friendliness and smoothness of service. ***Piazza Duomo, 16. 031 264 005. $$.***

Practical Matters—Como

Como's tourist office is very central at Piazza Cavour, 17, ☎ 031 3300 111, and has information on most destinations around the lake. The lake itself is criss-crossed by a series of regular ferry routes: it takes 4 hours to travel from one end of the lake to the other and there are frequent stops on the way. The most popular are Tremezzo (for Villa Carlotta, see p 131, bullet 7), Menaggio (for lots of bars and cafés, see p 134, bullet 5), Bellagio (see p 21, bullet 4), and classy, timeless Varenna (see p 135, bullet 9). Choose your mode of transport from a 1920s steamer, motorboats, hydrofoils, or car ferries. Passenger fares from Como are currently 11€ to Bellagio, half way up the lake, and 21.50€ to Colico in the north. The ferry terminal at Como is right on the lake esplanade at Via per Cernobbio, 18, ☎ 031 579 211, www.navigazionelaghi.it.

4 ★★ Basilica di San Fedele. Indulge in some window shopping down Via Vittorio, Como's mini-Quad d'Oro, with Gucci, Burberry, Alessi, and MaxMara very much in evidence in the shop windows. A right turn brings you to the Piazza San Fedele; in the left-hand corner its magical 11th-century Romanesque church has a simple façade and square bell tower, both much restored in the last century, and built over a 6th-century basilica.

Basilica di San Fedele.

Inside the church is equally simple, with a few frescoes dotted in the right-hand side aisle. It's a popular venue for weddings; if you catch one, sneak in the back and watch. 🕘 *15 min. Piazza San Fedele. No phone. Admission free. Daily 7.30am–12pm, 2.30–7pm.*

5 ★ Museo Didattico della Seta di Como. Take a 20-minute walk from the old to the modern town along Via Sirtori and Viale Aldo Moro and turn left along Via Castelnuovo. On the right hand side is the Silk Museum, opened in 1990, that traces the development of the region's extremely profitable silk industry over the centuries and has a fine collection of manufacturing machinery, including hand looms and plating machines used for stamping color onto the raw silk. 🕘 *45 min. Via Castelnuovo, 1. ☎ 031 303 180. www.museoseta como.com. Admission 8€, concessions 2.60€. Tues–Fri 9am–12pm, 3–6pm.*

6 ★★ Tempio Voltiano. If silk is not your thing, cut out a long walk and follow the lake-front around to the left to the neoclassical colonnaded mini-temple, built in 1927 by

Tempio Voltiano.

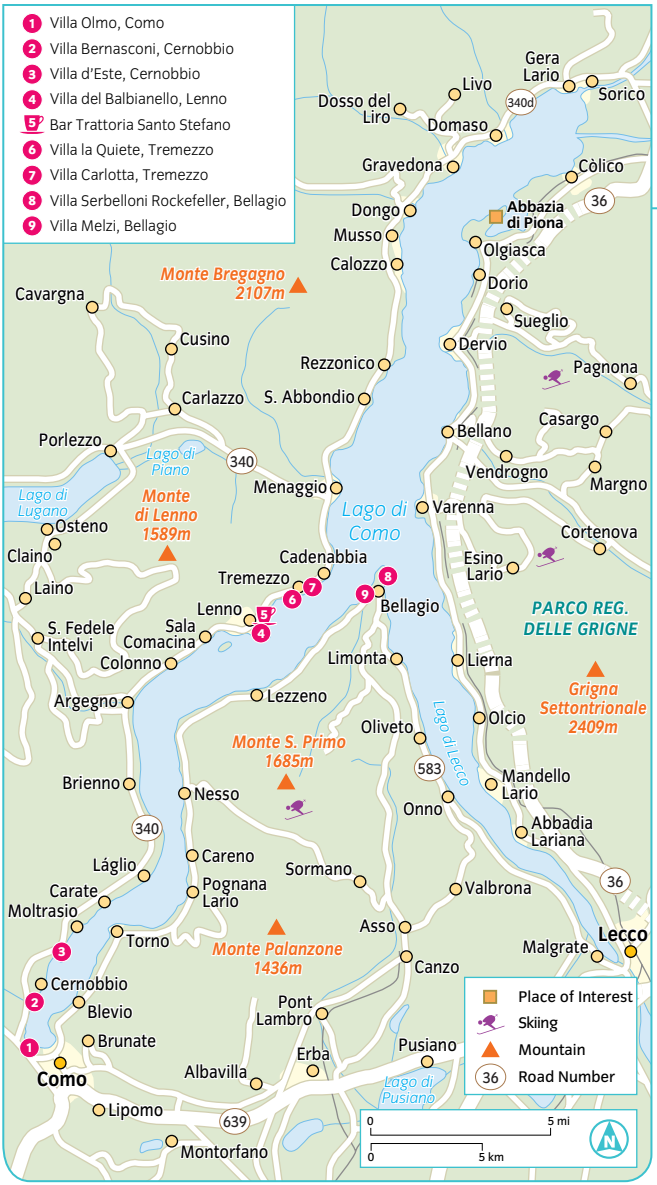
Federico Frigerio to house the relics of physicist Alessandro Volta, who invented the battery and gave us the word 'volt'. His letters, diaries, and drawings can be seen inside. You approach the building, perched on the lakeside, via a long avenue of trees. At night it is softly floodlit, lighting up the surrounding lake. When I was last in Como, the building was closed for refurbishment and the lakeside promenade was under wraps while redevelopment is carried out. It is hoped that this will be achieved by the end of 2009, when the temple is expected to re-open. ***Viale Marconi. ☎ 031 574 705. Admission unknown due to closure. When open: Tues–Sun 10am–12pm, 2–6pm.***

7 ★★★ kids Funicular to Brunate. Wander back towards the city center with the lake to your left until you're opposite the Tempio Voltiano. From the large piazza to your right a cable funicular runs 1084m (3556ft), at a gradient of 55 per cent, up the cliffside to **Brunate.** This otherwise tranquil village sprawls up the mountainside with lots of bars and restaurants and amazing views over Lake Como—get there on a clear day to spot the foothills of the Alps in the far distance. ***15 min. Funicular Office: Piazza de Gasperi, 4. ☎ 031 303 608. Ticket 2.45€, concessions 1.60€. Daily 6am–10.30pm, trains depart both ends of the line every 30 min.***

Sport on Lake Como

Life is slower around the Lakes than in mega-paced Milan and most children will be happy at the swimming lidos (see box, Swimming in Bellagio, p 22) dotted around Como, where there are normally lifeguards on duty, shallow pools for toddlers, and water slides. There are plenty of beaches too but some of these are without facilities and the water is cold all year around. Look out for windsurfing and sailing clubs in Gravedona (see p 134, bullet 7), which becomes a skiing destination in winter.

Villas around Lake Como



For centuries Lake Como was the playground of the aristocratic and wealthy families of Lombardy. As proof of that, there are 74 sumptuous villas around the shores of Como, some open to the public at certain times of the year, although several have been turned into luxury hotels and many are still in privileged private hands. Here is my personal choice for a variety-packed day trip around the lake. It's possible to drive or take the ferry to all these destinations. A word of advice: some of the guided tours need booking in advance.

1 ★ Villa Olmo, Como. Facing straight up Lake Como to the north, this colonnaded neoclassical mansion was built for the fabulously rich Odescalchi family by Lombard architect Simone Cantoni (1738–1818) in 1797. The formal gardens stretch down to the lake, with steps leading to a small dock; a baroque fountain sees cherubs frolic in the water. The villa passed into state hands in 1924 from the then-owner Visconti di Modrone, who carried out much renovation work on the frescoed rooms, a few of which are open to the public. *45 min. Via Cantoni, 1. 031 252 443. Mon–Sat 9am–12pm, 3–6pm (often closed Sat pm for weddings).*

2 ★ Villa Bernasconi, Cernobbio. A hop down the road on the outskirts of Cernobbio, this flamboyant Liberty villa from 1906 now houses a contemporary art gallery. The exterior is a riot of Art Nouveau detail, hammered concrete motifs, wrought-ironwork, balconies, and a panoramic tower on top. The interior has been messed around with, but you can still pick out original floor tiles in the entrance hall, wrought-iron work over the windows, and plaster work on the ceilings. The villa was designed for rich silk merchant Davide Bernasconi by famous Liberty architect Alfredo Campanini (1873–1926). *45 min. Via Regina, 7. 066 3242 863. Admission free. Opening times vary according to exhibition.*

3 ★★ Villa d'Este, Cernobbio. Across the busy road from Villa Bernasconi and adding a new meaning to the word 'luxurious', Villa d'Este has been a five-star hotel since 1873. Pellegrino Tibaldi built the Renaissance-style mega-villa on the lake's shores for the powerful Gallio family, and the landscaped grounds rolling down to the lake are full of follies and statuary. In the 17th century, it was owned by Caroline of Brunswick, the unfortunate wife of England's George IV, who was turned away from his coronation in 1821. More recent royal connections include the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. *1 hr. Via Regina, 40. 031 3481. www.villadeste.it. Guided tours by prior arrangement only.*

Baroque fountain at Villa Olmo, Como.

Como Facts & Figures

Long and skinny as it squeezes south between the foothills of the Alps, Lake Como is 178 km in total length: in places the lake is 414m (1,358ft) deep but only 650m (2,132ft) wide at its narrowest. It covers 145 km2 in area and the Como town shore is the most developed. In the north, a nature reserve has been created at Lake Mezzola, where the icy waters of the river Adda deposit silt at its confluence with Como.

4 ★★★ kids Villa del Balbianello, Lenno. Either drive up the lake-side Via Regina or take the ferry from Cernobbio to Lenno for a visit to the ornate landscaped gardens and 16th-century palace of Balbianello (featured in the recent Bond movie Casino Royale), sitting proud on its promontory above Lake Como. *1 hr. Guided tours available. See p 20, bullet 3 for full details.*

5 ★★★ Bar Trattoria Santo Stefano. If you are after lake views, stop off in one of the many bars along the shoreline at Lenno. Otherwise seek out this delightful trattoria for lunch in a charming, old-world piazza. Chef Claudio Zeni cooks up excellent lake trout in simple surroundings with cheery blue-and-white table cloths. There's also a tiny verandah for sunny days. *Piazza 11, Febbraio, 3, Lenno. 0344 55434. $$.*

6 ★ Villa la Quiete, Tremezzo. Ten minutes up the road, this villa is a baroque rebuild dating from the late 18th century, built on a smaller, 16th-century palazzo. The villa and its formal parterre gardens are closed to the public; it is only possible to peer through the gate at its majesty. But stop anyway to take pictures of Bellagio (see p 21, bullet 4) across the lake from the magnificent semi-circular stone landing stage. *10 min. Via Regina. www.villalaquiete.com. Closed to the public.*

Villa del Balbianello, Lenno.

Villa la Quiete, Tremezzo.

7 ★★★ kids Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo. A little farther up the road, Carlotta is the archetypal 18th-century neoclassical mansion, with a perfectly symmetrical white-washed façade and an Italianate terraced garden tumbling down elaborate staircases towards Lake Como. Inside, the highly stuccoed and marble apartments are full of decorative period furniture, sculpture by Antonio Canova, and neoclassical art by Franceso Hayez, including his *Last Kiss of Romeo and Juliet* (1823) in typical Romantic style. Visit in early summer for the bougainvillea as it trails over the terraces; youngsters can look for the fountain featuring a cherub peeing. ***90 min. Via Regina, 2. ☎ 0344 40405. www.villacarlotta.it. Admission 8€, concessions 4€. Daily 9am–6.30pm.***

8 ★★★ kids Villa Serbelloni Rockefeller, Bellagio. From Menaggio take the ferry directly across to Bellagio. Services run regularly (see box, p 126). Here there are two villas with luscious gardens watered by the Lario region's balmy mountain climate. Now owned by the Rockefeller Foundation, Villa Serbelloni stands high above Bellagio, reputedly on the site of Pliny the Younger's own summer residence. The impressive 16th-century house is closed to the public but the gardens are a magnificent feast of rhododendrons, magnolias, and palms that contrast with the formality of the 18th-century topiary and box hedges close to the house. The views down the lake from the terraces are worth the trip alone. ***1 hr. Piazza della Chiesa. ☎ 031 951 555. Apr–Oct. Gardens open for guided tours only; book in advance.***

9 ★★ kids Villa Melzi, Bellagio. White and square, neoclassical Melzi was the work of Milanese architect Giocondo Albertoli. In 1810 the Melzi d'Eril family (Napoleon Bonaparte was their patron, which is probably where they got all their money) moved in and their descendants still live there. The house is not open but the gardens run down to the lake and are planted with palms and cedars. Pathways lead along avenues of trees and statuary dots the landscape in 18th-century Romantic style. It probably looks best in autumn, when the trees turn to russet. From here, take the ferry back to Como (see box p 126 for details). ***45 min. Lungolario Marconi. ☎ 031 950 204. Admission 6€, concessions 5€. Open mid-Mar–Oct.***

The Magical Towns of Lake Como

Here's a fun-filled day seeing the sights of Lake Como, from the bustle of Como in the south to the flat marshy plains of the north. Choose hydrofoil or car to make your trip around the lake; if you're driving, it is feasible to drive all 178km, but it doesn't leave much time for sightseeing. So I suggest a trip up from Como around the northern extremities to Varenna, and then the car ferry to Bellagio for the switch-back ride back down to Como, lopping off the rugged leg of the lake that leads down to industrialized Lecco. **START: If you're driving, head west out of town towards the Swiss border (signposted Chiasso) and turn off right to the wealthy enclave of Cernobbio.**

1 ★★ Cernobbio. Among the glamorous villas along the shoreline (see p 129, bullets 2 and 3), Cernobbio sits under the shadow of Monte Bisbino and has a pleasant affluent air off the fume-ridden main road. Expensive boutiques and restaurants crowd around the tree-lined waterfront to cater for wealthy tourists flocking in from Milan to stay at the luxurious Villa d'Este (see p 129, bullet 3). It is more tranquil than Como and perfect for an early evening passeggiata (stroll) and *aperitivo*. Ferries connect to all the major towns on the lake, and the village is the start of the **Via Regina,** a road that travels right up the western shore of the lake. *1 hr. Tourist office: Via Regina, 33b. 031 349 730.*

2 ★ Moltrasio to Brienno. Carrying on up the lake through **Moltrasio,** there's a long stretch of road edged with fairytale villas, painted in bright colors and surrounded by immaculate gardens overlooking the water. Cute little inlets and public lidos dot the shoreline until **Brienno,** where it's worth a stop to admire the plain lines of the terracotta-colored church of San Giorgio, built in 1626, the tiny harbor next to it, the evocative war memorial close by, and the houses seemingly growing out of the lake. Just past Brienno, **Colonno** is the jumping off point for the ferry to **Isola Comacina,** which offers Byzantine ruins. *45 min. Tourist office: Town Hall. 031 814 016.*

3 ★★★ Tremezzo. The 19th-century retreat of the Italian aristocracy is 5km up the road. Although spoiled by the busy road that dissects it, Tremezzo hangs on to its prestigious reputation with a series of ornate villas, particularly the Villa

Tremezzo.

Carlotta (see p 131, bullet 7) and the exceptionally expensive Grand Hotel Tremezzo (see p 140) clutching the lakeside. The village is well connected to the ferry services plying the lake and there are perfect views across to Bellagio (see p 21, bullet 4). *45 min (2 hr for lunch). Tourist office: Via Regina, 3. 0344 40493.*

4 ★★ kids Hotel Bar Azalea. Eat lunch in a triangular, vine-covered courtyard opposite the lake and try to ignore the traffic as it roars past. Lasagne and pizza alla Marinara (seafood) are astonishingly good value for this elevated part of the world. *Via Portici San Pietro, 1, Tremezzo. 0344 40424. $$.*

5 ★★★ Menaggio. Tremezzo's neighbor is one of the most popular spots on Lake Como, and deservedly so. Dominated by the ruins of a medieval castle, it has an eccentrically shaped piazza ringed with bars and cafés and backed by houses painted in terracotta, with wrought-iron balconies. The enticing promenade is adorned with fountains and flower tubs as it curves around the small marina. This is a place to linger on a sunny afternoon, with a lido on the lake, trails leading into the mountains behind the town, and a plentiful supply of excellent ice cream stalls (try Il Gabbiano at the north end of the prom). *1 hr. Tourist office: Piazza Garibaldi, 3. 0344 32924. www.menaggio.com.*

6 ★★ Santa Maria Rezzonico. This sleepy village, 41km from Como, clings to the shoreline and is dominated by its restored 13th-century castle; it's closed to the public but you can wander round the exterior and peek into the tiny church of the Magi next door. On the way up to Gravedona, you'll pass through **Dongo,** where Benito Mussolini was captured in 1945. *15 min.*

7 ★★ Gravedona. The main town in the lake's northern region was a long-time political rival to Como, a wealthy town with a legacy of ancient churches, including the massive church of Santa Maria del Tiglio, decked out in smart striped stone, with a round 6th-century Romanesque baptistery. The town is well known today as a center for windsurfing and sailing. Its long waterfront esplanade is prettily lit

Menaggio Marina.

Varenna.

up at night. Beyond Gravedona, the countryside becomes markedly less attractive, with the gray granite foothills of the Alps casting their shadows over the marshy flatlands where the rivers Adda and Mera empty into the lake. ***1 hr. Tourist office: Piazza Cavour, 7. ☎ 0344 89637. www.gravedona.it.***

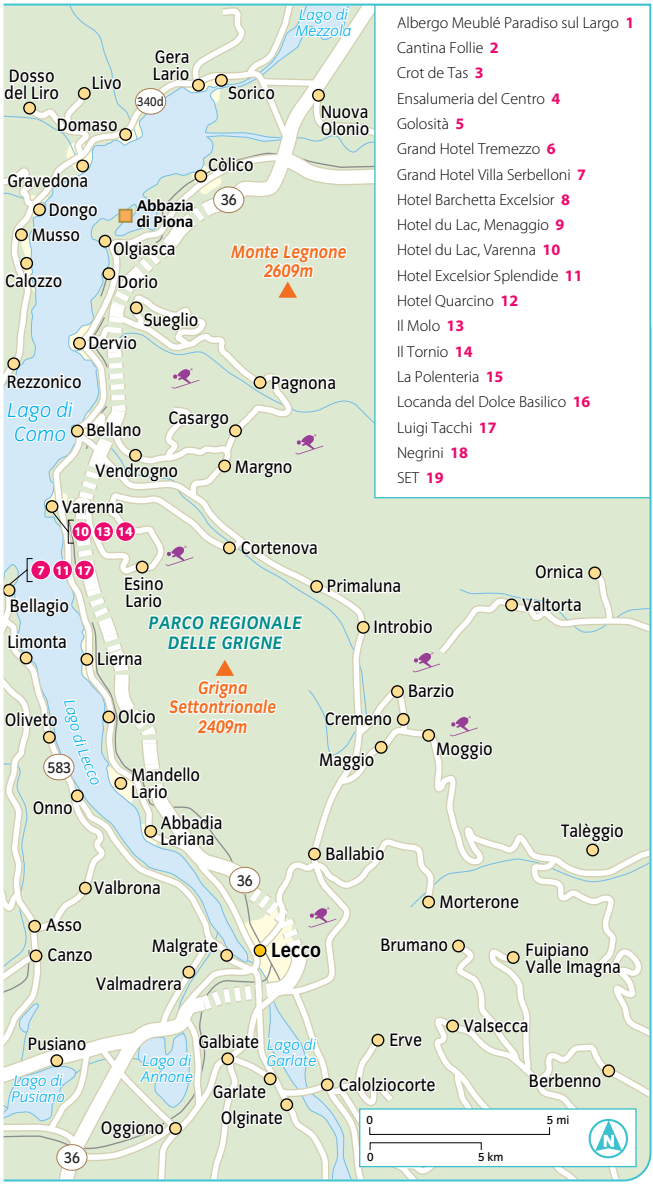
8 ★★★ **Bellano.** The next destination of note, Bellano is on the western side of Lake Como off a dual carriageway hacked into the cliff face, a section of road that recently starred in the opening scenes of the Bond film *Quantum of Solace* (2008). Once the summer home of the Milanese clergy, the town has preserved its medieval character, with a tangle of streets snaking back from the lakeside. Its primary attraction is the extraordinary torrent that the river Pioverna becomes as it pours down the hillside. Over the centuries it has cut a deep crevice into the cliffs; walk down the gorge to see the water apparently spurting out of solid rock—it's like a journey through Tolkien's Middle Earth. ***1 hr. Orrido. ☎ 0338 5246 716. Admission: 2.50€. Opening varies seasonally but roughly daily 10am–1pm, 2.30–7pm. Tourist office: Via Stoppani. ☎ 0341 820 044.***

9 ★★ **Varenna.** Just 2km down the road, refined Varenna is arguably the most attractive town on Como, with a tumble of pink and terracotta houses in a labyrinth of narrow, cobbled streets, and smart villas clustered around the shoreline. Instead of a wide promenade, its winding lakeside path hangs over the water, with bars, shops, and galleries looking over the lake. What better place to have a glass of *prosecco* (sparkling white wine) and watch the sun go down over the glittering water? From here take the car ferry back to Bellagio (see p 21, bullet 4) and return to Como. ***2 hr. Car ferry 11.50€ Varenna to Bellagio. Tourist office: Via IV Novembre, 7. ☎ 0341 830 367. www.varennaitaly.com.***

10 ★★★ **Bellagio** 48km from Como, the town of Bellagio sits in the middle of the Y-shape of the lake. ***See p 21, bullet 4.***

Como Shopping, Dining &

Lodging



- Albergo Meublé Paradiso sul Largo **1**
- Cantina Follie **2**
- Crot de Tas **3**
- Ensalumeria del Centro **4**
- Golosità **5**
- Grand Hotel Tremezzo **6**
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- Hotel Quarcino **12**
- Il Molo **13**
- Il Tornio **14**
- La Polenteria **15**
- Locanda del Dolce Basilico **16**
- Luigi Tacchi **17**
- Negrini **18**
- SET **19**

Como **Shopping A to Z**

Design

★★ **Negrini** COMO Smart shop selling everything for top-notch kitchens in Como's sleek shopping quarter; brightly colored iconic Alessi kettles, condiment sets, and soap dishes, plus complicated Le Pavoni *espresso* machines. ***Via Vittorio Emanuele, 50. ☎ 031 264 104. www.designware.ch. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 136.***

Fashion

★★ **SET** COMO A sophisticated and trendy women's boutique offering all the usual designer names plus some more off-beat ones: Watanabe, Dsquared, and Dries Van Noten. Inside, all is elegant creams and beige displays and surprisingly helpful service for such a smart shop. ***Via Vittorio Emanuele, 5. ☎ 031 262 498. www.tessabit.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 136.***

Food & Drink

★★★ **Cantina Follie** TREMEZZO Half wine bar and half specialist liquor store in the basement of an ancient house, one street back from the lakefront. This is the place to learn about local wines and taste regional cheeses. There's a cramped cellar and a sunny terrace for sampling the stock. Worldwide shipping service available. ***Via A Volta, 14. ☎ 0344 42311. AE, DC, MC, V. www.cantinafollie.it. Map p 136.***

Ensalumeria del Centro.

★★★ **Ensalumeria del Centro** COMO Como's favorite gourmet haven is filed to the rafters with local wines, virgin olive oils, salamis, grappa, and balsamic vinegars. The shop also sells limoncello, the tasty, light (but lethal) lemon liqueur beloved of the Italians as an *aperitivo*. There's a worldwide shipping service. ***Via Indipendenza, 25. ☎ 031 273 174. MC, V. Map p 136.***

Local Crafts

★★★ **Luigi Tacchi** BELLAGIO The best purveyor of local crafts in Bellagio, this shop is family-run and most of the wooden toys, bowls, and jewelry boxes are carved from olive wood on the premises. The distinctive trays and coasters typical of the region are hand-painted in a rainbow of colors; I think those decorated in burnt umber and turquoise patterns are the prettiest. ***Via Garibaldi, 22. ☎ 031 950 836. www.bellagio.co.nz/tacchi. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★★ **Il Tornio** VARENNA Tucked into an ancient house along Varenna's lakeside walkway, this shop sells highly glazed hand-thrown ceramics in cool shades of cream, green, and yellow as well as unglazed vases and fruit bowls in skinny designs by Lecco potter Luigi Biffi. ***Via Riva Garibaldi, 27. ☎ 0341 360 772. MC, V. Map p 136.***

Como **Dining A to Z**

★ **Crot de Tas** BRUNATE *REGIONAL ITALIAN* This restaurant is a bit rough around the edges and run by gourmets who source much of the menu's food in the nearby forests and mountains. So there's no menu but an ever-changing selection of meat dishes (casseroles, risottos) guaranteed to be local. There's also a wonderful wine list and the hosts are likely to join you for a glass of amaretto after dinner. In summer grab a table on the patio for views over the lake. ***Via Scalini, 68. ☎ 031 364 166. Entrees 12–25€. Open dinner Thurs–Tues. Map p 136.***

★ **Golosità** COMO *PIAZZA/PASTA* Near the funicular station (see p 127, bullet 7), this is a real 'locals' bar with round metal tables under the awning outside and a zinc bar where old men lean to discuss their day. Service is a bit haphazard but the crispy pizzas and fresh salads are reasonable value in comparison with bars in the center of Como. Avoid the house white wine—I found it acrid, and I'm being kind. Sit outside for the lake views (if you don't mind traffic fumes). ***Via Lungo Lario Trieste. ☎ 031 303 674. Entrees 8–15€. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 136.***

★★ **Locanda del Dolce Basilico** BRUNATE *REGIONAL ITALIAN* Booking is essential here. Although there's no choice of menu, the plus side is that the ingredients are sourced locally and cooked from scratch. In a cavernous room in an old dairy, dishes of wild boar salami, specialty pasta pesto with fresh basil (from which the name is taken), and trout from Lake Como, are served up by the charming hostess. ***Piazza San Maurizio, 24. ☎ 031 221 003. Entrees 15–25€. Dinner Thurs–Tues. Map p 136.***

★★★ **Il Molo** VARENNA *BAR FOOD* More of a bar than a fully blown restaurant, the menu offers seafood salads piled with prawns, tomato-and-garlic bruschetta, and sinful ice cream sundaes. The terrace overlooking the lake fills up fast on summer evenings with clientele watching the sun set and sipping prosecco from chilled glasses. ***Via Riva Garibaldi, 1. ☎ 0341 830 070. www.barilmolo.it. Entrees 10–25€. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 136.***

★★★ **La Polenteria** BRUNATE *REGIONAL ITALIAN* One of the best places I've eaten around Como considering the price. Laid out in a simple dining room, the walls are dressed with shelves full of wine bottles and old farm machinery. As the name suggests, *polenta* (cornmeal) is the signature dish but the rich, tasty rabbit risotto was divine, well accompanied by a fruity red Bardolino wine. There's a small bar for a *digestivo* of chocolate grappa after supper. ***Piazza San Maurizio, 14. ☎ 031 336 105. Entrees 18–30€. AE, MC, V. Dinner Fri–Sun. Map p 136.***

Como **Lodging A to Z**

★★ Albergo Meublé Paradiso sul Largo BRUNATE With 2009 as the new owners' second season, this *albergo* (a simple hotel without a restaurant) is finding its feet again after several years of closure. Right at the top of Brunate above Como town, it's in a little piazza surrounded by restaurants, and wild boar often come down to forage after dark. The rooms are simple but spotlessly clean and functional. The breakfast buffet is a bit scanty but compensated for by the stunning views over the lake from the picture window. ***Via Scalini, 70. ☎ 031 364 099. www.paradisosullago.it. 13 units. Doubles 100€ w/breakfast. MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★ Grand Hotel Tremezzo TREMEZZO This prestigious luxury hotel is housed in a massive palazzo overlooking the lake and across to Bellagio and has an all-pervasive air of formality. The rooms incorporate every feasible luxury: antique furniture, swathes of curtain, and four-poster beds plus green-marble bathrooms, some with his-and-hers baths. Dress up to dine in at La Terrazza restaurant, go casual in the Escale Grill and Winebar, or eat outside in the divinely romantic Candle Bar. A trendy bar and lido sit by the side of the lake, another pool in the rear garden, and a futuristic plunge pool in the TSpa. ***Via Regina, 8. ☎ 0344 42491. www.grandhotel tremezzo.com. 96 units. Doubles 240–700€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Mar. Map p 136.***

Grand Hotel Tremezzo.

★★★ Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni BELLAGIO If you're after a sybaritic experience, this is the place. Inside there are marble columns, baroque vaulted ceilings, and plush antiques that you would expect from a neoclassical mansion; outside there are vistas from the promontory, a pool, tennis courts, and the obligatory spa. Two restaurants provide haute cuisine dining in splendid surroundings and the rooms are top quality, furnished in grand style with painted wardrobes and bed-heads. ***Via Roma, 1. ☎ 031 950 216. www.villaserbelloni.it. 85 units. Doubles 235–970€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov–Apr. Map p 136.***

★★ Hotel Barchetta Excelsior COMO Dominating the lakefront with its 1960s edifice and steps away from Como's restaurants, Duomo (see p 125, bullet 1), and ferry terminal, the Barchetta has refurbished but still rather chintzy pink rooms and old-fashioned washrooms. A solid four-star, it has the feel of a big-city hotel but makes up for the lack of coziness with smooth service, a posh first-floor bar, and the rated Barchetta restaurant, which serves up Mediterranean dishes with romantic lake views at

night. Book a room with terrace at the front of the hotel overlooking the lake. ***Piazza Cavour, 1. ☎ 031 3221. www.hotelbarchetta.it. 84 units. Doubles 90–129€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★ Hotel du Lac, Menaggio MENAGGIO Opened in 2001, this cheery family-run hotel is in a fantastic situation on Menaggio's main piazza and has rooms decorated in virtually identical simple style but in different bright colors. Breakfast is served in the rooms or the café facing the lake. The affiliated bargain-priced hostel, La Dependance, is around the corner at Via Pesce, 3. ***Via Mazzini, 27. ☎ 0344 35281. www.hoteldulacmenaggio.it. 10 units. Doubles 140€ w/breakfast. MC, V. Map p 136.***

★★★ Hotel du Lac, Varenna VARENNA In pole position along the waterfront, the Du Lac is a boutique hotel with marble and wrought-iron decorating the public rooms. In a villa built in 1823, the rooms are all named after flowers and are kitted out in soothing tones of green and cream. The lakeside rooms all have wrought-iron balconies (reserve well in advance); there's a shady vine-covered terrace for coveted views and evening drinks. ***Via del Prestino, 11. ☎ 0341 830 238. www.albergodulac.com. 19 units. Doubles 145–215€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov–Feb. Map p 136.***

★★★ Hotel Excelsior Splendide BELLAGIO Even though the bedrooms are looking a bit tired and the restrooms need a revamp, this place has immense charm, aided by its position overlooking Lake Como in a Liberty-style villa with elaborate stucco work and marble floors in the foyer and dining room. There's a

Hotel du Lac, Varenna.

gorgeous terrace bang on the side of the lake; great for having lunch (see p 21). The hotel also has a private swimming pool in the terraced gardens at the back. ***Via Lungo Lago Manzoni, 28. ☎ 031 950 225. www.hsplendide.com. 50 units. Doubles 115–145€ w/breakfast. MC, V. Closed Oct–Mar. Map p 127.***

★ Hotel Quarcino COMO In a smart yellow villa tucked into a hillside a few meters from the funicular up to Brunate (see p 127, bullet 7) and about 15 minutes walk from the center of Como, this is a two-star bargain, with plain rooms and functional bathrooms and a tiny breakfast bar. On the plus side, you're well away from the traffic noise and there is a lovely suntrap of a terrace behind the hotel. ***Salita Quarcino, 4. ☎ 031 303 934. www.hotelquarcino.it. 13 units. Doubles 75–85€ w/breakfast. MC, V. Closed Nov–Dec. Map p 136.***

Touring Lake Maggiore

Lake Maggiore is more developed than Como; the main road hugs the waterline and at first glance it has less to offer than its eastern counterpart. Dig beneath the surface a little, however, and you will find both natural beauty and architectural wonders. There's plenty here for children, too. The following itinerary could be completed in a long day's driving or by jumping on and off ferries, but I suggest dipping in according to your interest. If you're going to the Swiss area at the head of the lake, don't forget your passport for traveling into Italy and remember that although you can pay with euros in Switzerland, the change comes back in Swiss francs.

1 ★ **Locarno.** The main city on Maggiore lies in Italian-speaking Switzerland and is a big sprawl of modern buildings surrounded by a light-industrial hinterland on a featureless river plain. There is a small medieval epicenter and a promenade that has seen better days. There's not much reason for lingering, except when the Film Festival hits town in August and there are showings of avant-garde movies (www.pardo.ch for details). 🕘 *30 min. www.maggiore.ch.*

2 ★★★ kids **Ascona.** Now almost swallowed up by Locarno creeping ever outwards, refined Ascona is a joy, breathing a quiet air of prosperity. A long pedestrianized promenade offers views straight down the lake; this is backed by brightly colored bars and restaurants, and a charming old town full of expensive shops carrying designers Polo, Ralph Lauren, Missoni, Burberry, and Paul & Shark. It's also good to see the occasional tacky souvenir shop selling cow bells. There's a lot for children to do, with a lido at the north end of the esplanade, a crazy golf course, and pedalos for hire. All in all, this is one of my favorite places around Maggiore, not loaded with great historical monuments but very rich in atmosphere and charisma and the perfect place to spend a lazy lunchtime. If you are on foot, the ferry terminal is halfway along the prom. 🕘 *1½ hr. Tourist office: Via Papio.* ☎ *+ 41 91 751 80 00. www.ascona.ch.*

3 ★★★ kids **Luino.** If you choose to head down the Lombardy (west) shore of the lake, you're back in Italy at Zenna. Taking the Piedmont (west) bank, rejoin this tour at bullet 10. Down the Lombardy side, the road passes through **Maccagno**, a small town and major camping and water-sports center, with walking trails leading into the Malcantone hills (see www.comune.maccagno.va.it for details). Next in line is Luino, an attractive town with a medieval heart and home of one of northern Italy's biggest markets, which takes over the town center from Piazza Risorgimento to the waterfront every Wednesday, and more often in the summer. Here you'll find ethnic goods from all over

Ascona Café.

Practical Matters

Lake Maggiore has several sizeable towns, including Stresa, Verbania, Locarno, and Luino, and there are tourist offices in every one. Refer to individual entries for details. About a quarter of the northern section of the lake lies in Switzerland and it is all crossed by a series of regular ferry routes. It takes 2 hours to travel from Arona to Locarno by hydrofoil; on slower services there are frequent stops on the way. Choose your mode of transport from motorboats, hydrofoils, or the car ferry, which only runs between Intra on the west shore and Laveno on the eastern side (6.50€ for a car), from where a train service connects with Milan. Fares are currently 8.40€ to Cannobio, half way up the lake; 21.50€ from Arona to Locarno in the north. The most popular stops with visitors are Luino (see p 143, bullet 3), Laveno (for the cable-car ride, see below), Stresa (for lots of bars and cafés and the Isole Borromee, see p 148, bullet 6), Arona (for its shopping, see p 149, bullet 1), and smart Ascona (see p 143, bullet 2) in Switzerland. The main ferry office is in Arona at Viale Baracca, 1. ☎ 03 22 23 32 00, www.navigazionelaghi.it.

the world and knock-off designer accessories; on the plus side there are also spices, organic provisions, and fine locally-tooled leather belts and bags, for which the region is justly famous. Haggle with care so as not to offend the stallholders. If you don't catch the Wednesday market, visit the 17th-century church of San Giuseppe on Via Giuseppe, with a magnificent organ made by Pietro Ligari (1686–1752); otherwise there's an esplanade, shaded with plane trees and with bars to sit in while watching the ferries going about their business. Services run from Luino railway station to Milan Stazione Centrale (see p 163) in just under two hours. 🕘 *2 hr. Tourist office: Piazza Liberta (opposite ferry terminal).* ☎ *0332 530 019.*

4 ★ Laveno. 25km south of Luino on a frankly dull drive along the lakeside, Laveno was an Austrian naval base during the Habsburg occupation; it's situated on a sweeping cove and has direct rail links to Milan and the elegant city of Varese nearby. It also boasts the only car-ferry connection with the opposite side of the lake at Intra in Verbania (see p 151, bullet 11). 🕘 *20 min. Tourist office: Piazza Italia, 2.* ☎ *0332 666 666.*

5 ★★★ kids Sasso del Fero. Most people visit Laveno to take the 15-minute green cable-car trip 1,062m (3484ft) up the Val Cuvia to Sasso del Ferro. Up here, far removed from the bustle of the lake, peerless views stretch to the Alps in the west and the small lakes of Monate and Comabbio to the south. If you're lucky, you'll see buzzards and eagles circling overhead. On the journey up the mountain I heard wild boars rummaging in the woodland below. 🕘 *Journey 15 min each way, 1 hr for lunch. Laveno Mombello.* ☎ *0332 668 012. Admission 12€ return. Weather conditions*

Santa Caterina's monastery.

make opening times vary, but basically open daily summer 11am–7pm; winter Sat–Sun 11am–5pm.

6 ★★★ kids Ristorante Settimo Cielo. I'm giving this restaurant three stars for the amazing views from the terrace rather than the service, which is slow, slow, slow at the height of the summer. Still, the pasta and secondi dishes are hearty and prices reasonable, considering the location on top of a mountain. There's also a bar for anyone needing a quick pick-me-up after the cable-car ride. ***Monte Sasso del Fero, Laveno Monbello. ☎ 0332 610 303. www.funivie dellagomaggiore.it. $$.***

Lake Maggiore Facts & Figures

Lake Maggiore is long and thin, similar in shape to Como, but with no extra 'leg'. Like Lake Como, it is bordered by the Alps in the north and fed by their mountain rivers, the Ticino and the Tresa, which flows in from Lake Lugano in the east. The lake is 198km in total length: in places the lake is 372m deep and 11km at its widest. It covers 212 km^2 in area and is generally more developed than Como.

7 ★★★ kids Santa Caterina del Sasso Ballaro. After the cable car journey back to Laveno, follow the lakeside road again A car park on the right, 3km south of Laveno and just after the village of Reno, signals the trek down to a spectacular monastery clinging to an escarpment 15m (49ft) above the waters of Maggiore. When I visited, the 286 steps down to Santa Caterina were being renovated; it looked as though an elevator was being installed up the cliff face. This tranquil, magical place was founded in the 12th century by a local merchant in thanks for surviving a shipwreck on the lake. How it was ever built, meters down a sheer rock face, remains a mystery. Home to Dominican monks since 1230, the monastery is embellished with Renaissance arches, photogenic courtyards, and 14th-century frescoes of biblical scenes in the chapel. These were hidden under lime during the suppression of monasteries in the 1770s and only discovered during renovations in 2003. If you arrive here in early evening, the views out across the lake at sunset are tear-jerking in their beauty. The monks sell honey, candles, and soaps in their gift shop, some made on site. *1 hr. Via Santa Caterina, 5, Leggiuno. 0332 647 172. Admission free, donation. Apr–Oct 8.30am–12pm, 2.30–6pm; Nov–Mar Sat–Sun 9am–12pm, 2–5pm.*

8 ★★ Rocca Borromeo. Sitting on its hill overlooking the southern end of the lake and across to Arona (see p 149, bullet 1)—the views are especially dramatic from the square tower—this massive fortress was constructed on the ruins of a Roman castle and belonged to the Visconti, rulers of Lombardy in the 13th century, before passing to the Borromeo family and remaining with them today. Its walls are largely intact and vineyards flourish all around the estate; the castle buildings are built around a courtyard leading on to the Sala di Giustizia, frescoed with 13th-century tales of Visconti derring-do. Twelve rooms play host to the **Museo della Bambola** (Dolls' Museum), with sinister toys made from papier-mâché, porcelain, and cloth. *1 hr. Via Rocca, Angera. 0332 931 300. Admission 7.50€, concessions 6.50€.*

Rocca Borromeo.

Cannobio Harbor.

Mar–Oct daily 9am–6.30pm; last entry 5.30pm.

9 ★★★ **Cannobio.** If you choose to drive down the Piedmont side of Maggiore, you'll hit customs at **Brissaga**, and then drive 10km south to Cannobio, a real gem with a medieval street plan, pedestrianized waterfront, a marina full of dinghies, and Borromeo-built churches. Here you'll find a great selection of restaurants spilling tables out on to the waterfront and under stripy awnings: perfect for lunch. The ferry from Ascona stops in Cannobio on its way down the lake, and so boat hopping down to Laveno (bullet 4) is feasible, although it takes about two hours.

If you have time, stop awhile at dozy **Cannero Riviera**, a mini-version of Cannobio on the way south; it's the sort of place where people fall asleep on promenade benches after a leisurely lunch. From here drive south to Verbania (see p 151, bullet 11) to catch the car ferry across the lake to Laveno and rejoin the itinerary at bullet 5.

Kids' Fun Around Maggiore

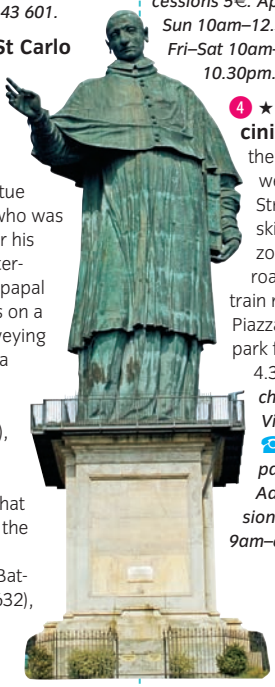
For high-level fun, take the cable-car up Monte Sasso del Ferro from Laveno (see p 144) for glorious views over Lake Maggiore and a welcome ice cream. **Parco della Villa Pallavicino** in Stresa (www.parcozoopallavicino.it, see p 149, bullet 4) has Maggiore's mini-zoo, with llamas, flamingoes, and vultures on show as well as an electric train running to the park from the center of Stresa.

Stresa & Isole Borromee

Today is your opportunity to discover more about the all-powerful Borromeo family, the Lombardian aristocrats who played a major part in Milanese politics and religion for 200 years and spawned Federico (1564–1631), archbishop of Milan, and Carlo (1538–1584), a Catholic cardinal. Regarding large tracts of land around the southern end of Maggiore as their own personal fiefdom, they built castles, monuments, and palaces on the islands. Drive or take the ferry; the choice is yours as this small patch of Piedmont is easily accessible on the water.

1 ★★★ kids Arona. Kick off the day's explorations in this delightful town at the southern end of Maggiore, with a long waterfront promenade running into a spacious piazza, which is surrounded by cheerily painted houses and arcaded Renaissance churches. The cobbled and charming Via Cavour runs parallel, lined with sophisticated stores well worth an hour's investigation. *1hr. Tourist information: Piazzale San Carlo. 0322 243 601.*

2 ★★ Statue of St Carlo Borromeo, Arona. Clearly signposted up the hill, just north of the piazza, is the 35m-high bronze statue of Carlo Borromeo, who was canonized in 1610 for his support of the Counter-Reformation against papal infallibility. He stands on a hillock earnestly surveying his estates—there's a clear view across to the Rocca Borromeo (see p 146, bullet 8), his family home, on the opposite side of the lake. Don a hard hat to clamber up inside the statue, which was designed by Giovan Battista Crespi (1573–1632), but cast and finished in 1698 by local sculptors. *30 min. Piazzale San Carlo. 0322 249 669. Admission 2.50€; 4€ to go inside statue. Open mid-Mar–Oct daily 9am–12pm, 2–6.30pm; other times vary.*



Statue of St Carlo Borromeo, Arona.

3 ★★ Villa Ponti, Arona. Just around the corner from San Carlo, changing art exhibitions are held in a spectacular series of Renaissance rooms. *45 min. Via San Carlo, 63. 0322 446 29. Admission 6€, concessions 5€. Apr–Sept Mon–Thurs, Sun 10am–12.30pm, 2.30–7.30pm; Fri–Sat 10am–12.30pm, 2.30–10.30pm.*

4 ★ kids Villa Pallavicinio. From Arona take the fast A26 road up the western shore to Stresa. On the outskirts, there's a small zoo and gardens to roam in. An electric train runs from Stresa's Piazza Imbarcadero to the park from 9.30am to 4.30pm. *4 hr with children. Parco della Villa Pallavicinio. 0323 315 33. www.parcozoopallavicino.it. Admission 9€, concessions 6€. Daily Mar–Oct 9am–6pm.*

5 ★★★ kids **Stresa.** Historically the town grew in importance owing to its proximity to the three Isole Borromee (Borromean islands) (see below, bullets **8**, **9** and **10**). Now a genteel tourist town, it captured the hearts of 19th-century travelers and aristocracy, who settled in droves in grandiose villas and hotels strung along the promenade. There's a lido and beach club along the lake front. Just back into the tangle of medieval streets, Piazza Cadorna is a mass of restaurants, which spill out into the center of the square in summer; it looks for all the world like Marbella in southern Spain. There's a food and craft market on summer Thursday afternoons along the prom (see p 154). 🕘 *2 hr. Tourist office: Lungolago di Stresa.* ☎ *0323 313 08.*

6 ★★★ kids **Funivia Stresa Alpino Mottarone.** Make a side trip up the cable-car to the 1,490m (4,888ft) summit of Mottarone in the mountains behind the town; it's possible to ski in winter. 🕘 *20-min ride to top. Piazzale Lido.* ☎ *0323 302 95. www.stresa-mottarone.it. Admission 9€, concessions 6.50€. Hours vary according to season.*

7 ★★ kids **Pizzeria La Piazzetta.** Back in town, it's time for lunch: head for the best pizza parlor on Stresa's central square. Go for the Diablo, laced with chilli, or Marinara, with quality seafood, and watch the staff run in and out of the restaurant with your orders. *Piazza Cadorna, 28.* ☎ *0323 316 51. $$.*

8 ★★ kids **Isola dei Pescatori.** Once you have your boat (see box, Practical Matters, p 151) sit back for the short lake trip across to the islands. Arrange a pick-up time with your guide. Pescatori is a real tourist trap and stuck in a time warp, with medieval houses clustered together on every inch of the tiny island. Wander the meandering cobbled streets to discover art galleries, churches, souvenir shops, restaurants, and, at every turn, a glimpse of the lake beyond. An entrancing place to explore, but don't be tempted by the

The ceiling of the Baroque palazzo, Isola Bella.

Practical Matters—Isole Borromee

Getting across to the three Isole Borromee is a wonderfully Italian feat in itself: at the height of summer an unseemly scramble of tourists clamber to get on board the boats. Park in Piazza Imbarcadero on the waterfront. At the lakeside there are numerous small craft ready to make the 10-minute journey across to the islands. Boatmen shout to get your attention; don't be intimidated as it's all very good-natured. Prices are (currently) regulated at 66€ to visit all three islands or 55€ for two. For more information on the islands, call ☎ 0323 301 50 (www.borromeoturismo.it).

restaurants; their situations on the jetty might be gorgeous but the prices are not. 🕘 *45 min.*

9 ★★★ **Isola Bella.** The minute islet of Bella is dominated by the massive baroque palazzo and formal Italianate gardens built by the Borromeos in the 17th century. The islet makes for an absorbing tour and its conspicuous display of wealth is evident everywhere. The terraced gardens are dotted with follies and white peacocks, and have spectacular views across the lake. There's a tourist market with inflated prices as you leave the complex, but don't miss the stall selling delicious organic ice cream. 🕘 *1½ hr. Palazzo Borromeo.* ☎ *0323 305 56. Admission 12€, concessions 5€. Guided tours in English 35€. Mar–Oct 9am–6pm.*

10 ★★★ **Isola Madre.** The largest of the three islets, Madre offers a splendid 18th-century villa dating from the 1800s, furnished with period pieces; there's also a small puppet theater and a rare collection of Italian porcelain. The terrace at the rear of the mansion is suspended over lawns inscribed with the word *humilitas* (humility)—something the Borromeos knew little about. The surrounding botanical gardens are full of ancient cypress trees, wisteria, and azaleas. 🕘 *1 hr. Palazzo Borromeo.* ☎ *0323 312 61. Admission 10€, concessions 5€. Guided tours in English 35€ (book the previous day). Mar–Oct 9am–6pm.*

11 ★★★ kids **Verbania.** Two towns in one, Verbania is formed by industrial Intra and Pallanza, which has a lido and pleasant esplanade overlooking the Isole Borromee, as well as the Romanesque church of Madonna di Campagna on its outskirts. Intra is the major port on the lake and site of the car ferry across to Laveno (see p 144, bullet 4), from where there are rail links to Milan Stazione Centrale (see p 163). 🕘 *20 min. Tourist office: Corso Zanitello, 8.* ☎ *0323 503 249.*

Isola dei Pescatori.

Maggiore Shopping, Dining &

- Angelo Vicari 1
- Café Sport 2
- Concreta 3
- Gelateria Bar Romano 4
- Giovedì Bancarelle Sotto le Stelle 5
- Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées 6
- Hotel Cannobio 7
- Hotel Castello Seeschloss 8
- Hotel Poggio Sant'Elsa 9
- Idea by Ricami Veronica 10
- La Piazzetta 11
- Pasticceria L'Albero delle Dolcerre 12
- SEVEN 13

Lodging

Cimetta
1671m
Lago di
Vogorno
Tegna
Locarno
Intragna
Losone
Ascona
Porto Ronco
Isole
Brissago
Brissago
Vira
S. Nazzaro
Gera
Gambarogno
Ranzo
Monte
Faierone
1715m
Tronzano
Lago Maggiore
Cannobio
Cannero
Riviera
Maccagno
Monte Lema
1621m
Monte Tamaro
1961m
SWITZERLAND
Arosio
Astano
Curio
Agno
Lugano
Lago
Maggiore
Luino
Germignaga
Montegrino
Valtravaglia
Porto
Valtravaglia
Ponte
Tresa
Grantola
Lavena
Melide
Lago di
Lugano
Caprino
Campione
d'Italia
Monte
Generoso
1701m
Morcote
Maroggia
Brusino
Arsizio
Scudellate
Monte Nudo
1235m
Ghirla
Cuveglio
Porto Ceresio
Serpiano
Riva S. Vitale
Brenta
Castello
Cabiglio
ITALY
Meride
PARCO DEL
CAMPO
DEI FIORI
Campo dei Fiori
1226m
Saltrio
Caneggio
Mendrisio
Monte Bisbino
1325m
Besozzo
Gavirate
Gaggiolo
Chiasso
Biandronno
Varese
Lago di
Varese
Travedona
Malnate
S. Fermo d.
Battaglia
Lago di
Monate
Ternate
Bodio
Azzate
Lucino
Binago
Lago di
Comabbio
Morazzone
Corgeno
Castiglione
Olona
Bilgaro-
grasso
Vergiate
Besnate
Cugnasco
Tenero
Magadino
Sementina
Bellinzona
Giubiasco
A. del Tiglio
Isone
Sonvico
Cadro
S. Mamete
Gandria
0
5 mi
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5 km
N
13
8
2
7
34
394
233
344
342
A8
A9
N2

Maggiore Shopping A to Z

Design

★★★ **Angelo Vicari** ARONA
A wonderful household store full of contemporary designs for the home in a smart little enclave of shops in Arona. Expensive glassware in myriad shades and shapes, stylish Danish china, Swarovski crystal, and silver candlesticks are thoughtfully laid out in a wooden-floored gallery space. A shipping service is available. *Corso Cavour, 125. ☎ 0322 242 004. www.vicari.it. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.*

Food & Drink

★★ **Pasticceria L'Albero delle Dolcerre** ARONA An enticing bakery full of goodies to make a picnic: mini-pizzas, bruschetta, and brioches. Arona's oldest confectioners also produces decorated cakes in all shapes and themes, pastries, chocolates, and ice cream in fruity flavors for a mid-afternoon sugar rush.

Idea by Ricami Veronica, Stresa.

Corso Cavour, 54. ☎ 0322 242 396. MC, V. Map p 152.

Local Crafts

★★ **Concreta** ISOLA DEI PESCATORI By far the most interesting shop on the island (see p 150, bullet 8), this sells raku (crackled) glaze ceramics by Wanda Petrucco, who also has a workshop here. Prices are fair and the work beautiful in its simplicity and clean colors. It is hidden down a minute cobbled lane behind the boat quay. *Via di Mezzo, corner Via del Forno. ☎ 0323 303 54. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.*

★ **Idea by Ricami Veronica** STRESA A chain of shops selling embroidered linen aprons with natty slogans on them. Other offerings include personalized bibs, purses, and chefs' hats. Embroidery commissions are taken in any language and can usually be executed within the day. It's all very touristy, but the perfect present for keen cooks. There's another branch on Isola dei Pescatori. *Piazza Cadorna, 14. ☎ 0336 995 949. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.*

Market

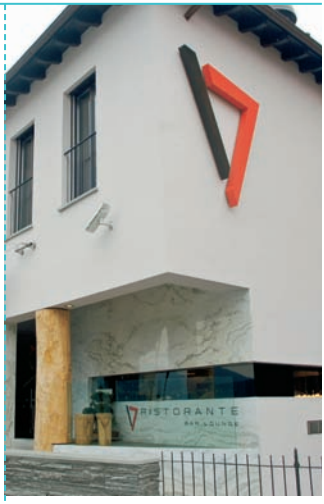
★★★ **Giovedì Bancarelle Sotto le Stelle (Thursday Market Under the Stars)** STRESA A summer market running from June to September along the quayside, with a fantastic mix of foodstuffs from local producers (olive oils, hearty red wines, paneforte) and crafts, such as necklaces carved from coral jewelers and gold-flecked carnival masks. Floodlit after dark, the market acquires a jolly, fiesta-like atmosphere when stallholders offer customers grappa and mulled wine. *Lungolargo. ☎ 0349 5608 408. No credit cards. Map p 152.*

Maggiore **Dining A to Z**

★ **Café Sport** CANNOBIO *PIZZA/PASTA* The best among a row of restaurants along Cannobio's long esplanade (see p 147). It's always busy but the service is immaculate, if a little brusque. Pizza Marinara and spaghetti bolognese fly out of the kitchen at a rate of knots for multi-national tourists, but on weekend lunchtimes Italian families file in for long, noisy lunches. ***Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, 23. ☎ 0323 701 35. Entrees 8–30€. MC, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 152.***

★ kids **Gelateria Bar Romano** LAVENO *ITALIAN* A reasonable choice in a town lacking in good foodie options. There's a tiled dining room inside and a quiet piazza outside to catch glimpses of the lake. Pasta dishes come in huge helpings, and salads are fresh and served piled high with shaved Parmigiano and lots of tasty fresh tomatoes. Youngsters will love the sticky *gelato* desserts, which they can choose by photograph from a well-thumbed menu. ***Via Labiena, 41. ☎ 0332 668 332. Entrees 8–15€. MC, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 152.***

★★ kids **La Piazzetta** STRESA *PIZZA* In welcoming Piazza Cadorna in Stresa's old town (see p 150) and surrounded by other eateries, this is always full. The dining room is plainly decorated with a wooden bar and gets tremendously noisy by the end of the evening. During the summer the tables move into the center of the piazza and chaos ensues, with waiters dashing to and fro. Although there are lots of options on the menu, stick to the pizzas; the Diavolo leaves a demon chili taste in your mouth. ***Piazza Cadorna, 28. ☎ 0323 316 51. Entrees 8–25€, pizzas 5–12€. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 150.***



SEVEN, Ascona.

★★★ kids **SEVEN** ASCONA *INTERNATIONAL* The first really trendy restaurant I have seen around Maggiore is at the end of Ascona's quayside. A barbecue is going all day by the lake and the glass-fronted main restaurant—light, airy, and with a contemporary design—is across the road. Immaculate light cuisine is served from an open kitchen, and there are plenty of vegetarian options; a welcome change from the pasta and meat diet found elsewhere. There's a SEVEN café at the other end of town. ***Piazza Motta. ☎ + 41 91 780 77 77. www.seven-ascona.ch. Entrees 15–45€. AE, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Map p 152.***

Maggiore **Lodging A to Z**

★★ Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées STRESA The majestic old lady of the Stresa foreshore is a Belle Epoque fantasia of over-gilded furniture in a series of ornate public rooms that exude class and expense. With restaurants formal and casual, swimming pools, tennis courts, a spa, and impeccable service, it's the destination of choice for the glitzy brigade—the helicopter landing pad at the rear of the hotel says it all really. ***Corso Umberto,1. ☎ 0323 938 938. www.borromees.it. 172 units. Doubles 236–1,185€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

★★★ Hotel Cannobio CANNOBIO A dreamy hotel located in an 18th-century palazzo full of contemporary touches (modern lighting and trendy cutlery and glassware) but retaining the rich décor appropriate to the era. Book well in advance for a room with a lake view, but whichever you have will be luxuriously decorated in deep reds or blues, with luscious marble bathrooms. Across the pedestrianized piazza, chef Marco Minnucci runs his eponymous restaurant overhanging the lake. ***Piazza Vittorio Emanuele III, 6. ☎ 0323 739 639. www.hotelcannobio.com. 19 units. Doubles 130–250€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

★★★ Hotel Castello Seeschloss ASCONA Housed partly in a 13th-century castle, this hotel is at the quiet end of glossy Ascona's (see p 143, bullet 2) promenade. The rooms have been reworked and upgraded in the last few years and are decorated with subtle tones; all come with new bathrooms. The rooms in the castle are the best, generally with more style and space—some with four-poster beds or frescoes on the ceilings. Request these rooms when booking. There's now a private pool on the lake as well as a swimming pool in the leafy garden behind the hotel. ***Piazza Motta. ☎ +41 91 791 01 61. www.castello-seeschloss.ch. 45 units. Doubles 155–368€ w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Map p 152.***

★ Hotel Poggio Sant' Elsa LAVENO If location is all, the owners are on to a winner here, atop the Sasso del Ferro cable-car (see p 144, bullet 5) and surrounded by wilderness. Rooms are rudimentary but spotless and all have views 1,062m (3,484ft) down to Lake Maggiore. It's the perfect base for hiking in the Val Cuvia hills or as a romantic weekend escape. Everything you need is here, with a bar and restaurant in situ. ***Laveno Mombello. ☎ 0332 668 012. www.funivie dellagomaggiore.it. 15 units. Doubles 30–70€ w/breakfast. MC, V. Map p 152.***

Hotel Castello Seeschloss, Ascona.

The
Savvy Traveler

Before You Go

Italian State Tourist Offices (ENIT)

In the US: New York: 630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1565, New York, NY 10111, ☎ +01 212/245-5618. Chicago: 500 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2240, Chicago, IL 60611, ☎ +01 312/644-0996. Los Angeles: 12400 Los Angeles Boulevard, Suite 550, Los Angeles, CA 90025, ☎ +01 310/820-1898. All offices: www.italiantourism.com.

In the UK: 1 Princes Street, London W1B 2AY, ☎ +44 (0) 20 7408 1254, www.italiantouristboard.co.uk.

In Australia: Level 4, 46 Market Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, ☎ +61 2 9262 1666, www.italiantourism.com.au.

In Canada: 175 Bloor Street East, South Tower, Suite 907, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R8, ☎ +01 416 925 4882, www.italiantourism.com.

The Best Times to Go

Milan is an inland city and so there's a marked difference between winter and summer temperatures. The city becomes fiercely cold in winter and unbearably hot in August; the best times to go are between April and July, or September. The spring months are warm and sunny when strong breezes clear the winter smog; May through to July are the warmest months, with balmy nights but the level of tourists slowly building up. August sees the exodus of the locals to escape the mugginess and heat; you will find a quiet city mainly populated by tourists. Many bars, restaurants, and shops close for the month, others for the last two weeks' annual holidays. Late fall sees persistent rain and gray skies. A visit in the winter finds an entertaining city, with plenty happening, but do bring warm clothes. Prices in the hotels may be lower in the winter months, with the exception of the weeks around Christmas and New Year.

Festivals & Special Events

JANUARY THROUGH MARCH. Three Kings (**Corteo dei Re Magi**) falls on January 6th, with processions and a tableau of the Nativity passing from the Duomo down Via Torino to Sant'Eustorgio (see p 26). Three times a year Milan becomes the focus of the world's fashion cognoscenti in a bonanza of parties, shows, and concerts. One week in January shows clothes for men, whereas the last week in February and first in March feature **Milanovendemoda** (www.milanovendemoda.it), the womens' fashion shows for the following Fall, with events run by the Chamber of Fashion. The city is over-run with models, designers, and press.

FEBRUARY'S **Carnevale Ambrosiano** culminates in a grand procession of floats through the streets to the Duomo on the first Sunday of Lent. For one week in March, all Milan's public museums are free; special concerts, wine tastings, and guided tours form part of the **Settimana del Beni Culturali** (week of culture) (both www.beniculturali.it). Tied into this is the weekend opening of normally private palazzi throughout the city for the **Giornata FAI di Primavera** (www.fondoambiente.it).

APRIL THROUGH JUNE. The local half-marathon is run the first or second Sunday in April (www.stramilano.it) and, as befits a city proud of its world-class design skills, Milan hosts the **Salone Internazionale del Mobile** (International Furniture Design Show, www.cosmit.it) for a week during late April. Mid-May's **Orticola ai Giardini Pubblicci**

(www.orticoa.org) is a cute weekend flower show; popular with the great and good of Milan. The first two weeks of June see the **Festa del Navigli**, a celebration along the canals, with illuminations, market stalls, street performers, live music, and parades. Later in June, things hot up when the catwalk kings return to town for a week of menswear shows, and a series of open-air concerts and exhibitions in Parco Sempione celebrate **Milano d'Estate** (Milan in summer).

JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER. Despite the absence of many of its citizens, who disappear to the coast, the mountains, or the Lakes to sit out the summer humidity in comfort, Milan still has a couple of tricks up its sleeve. The streets of the **Navigli** continue as party town, with late-night openings and bars spilling out onto the streets. On the outskirts of the city, Assago gets salsa fever during its **Festival Latino Americando** (www.latinoamericando.it), stretching through July until late August, with performances by Latino stars, food tastings, and lots of street music. September's **Milano Film Festival** (www.milanofilmfestival.it) showcases international cinema and winds up with a mammoth party at Castello Sforzesco (see p 31).

OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER. A full marathon (www.milanocitymarathon.it) is run in early October, when the second womens' design jamboree brings the fashion junket rolling back into town (www.milanovendemoda.it). **Rock'n'Music Planet** (www.rockandmusicplanet.com) is the world's longest open-air music festival, stretching from October until the following March; it sees a concert per day staged in Piazza del Duomo.(At the time of writing, no one could confirm if this would continue after 2009.)

Milan Jazz Festival kicks off in November (www.milanojazzinfestival.com) and sees big-name international jazz musicians hit town in a series of venues. The **Festa di Sant'Ambrogio** on 7th December celebrates the feast day of Milan's patron saint with parties, and a market around Sant'Ambrogio (see p 74). It also heralds the opening of the new season at La Scala (see p 106). At the same time, the annual Christmas market of **Oh bei! Oh bei**! settles in around Sant'Ambrogio and Parco Sempione, selling local sweets, organic goodies, and ethnic products from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Christmas in Milan is a jolly affair, full of markets selling mulled wine and *schnapps*, street concerts, carol singers, and general bonhomie. **Milan Presepi** exhibits charming nativity scenes (*presepi*) in Piazza del Duomo (5€) from early December until 9th January.

The Weather

Taking its climate from continental Europe, Northern Italy has extremes of temperature. It is cold in winter; in Milan the fog comes down and a freezing Alpine wind sends temperatures plunging; the thermometer often drops below freezing and snowfalls sometimes settle. In summer the mercury gets as high as 25ºC (77ºF), with average temperatures around 20ºC (68ºF). A humid heat haze empties the city of locals in August (see p 158). There are often freak rain storms in May, but precipitation is heaviest during October and November, with up to 12cm (almost 5 inches) in October. Outside Milan, it's best to visit the Lakes in early summer, when temperatures are around 20–22ºC (68–72ºF): pleasant and dry, with shade provided by the surrounding mountains. Rainfall is high, with storms prevalent in May, September, and

AVERAGE RAINFALL AND TEMP

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
MM	61	58	71	85	98	81
Inches	2.	2.3	2.8	3.4	3.9	3.2
°F	34.5	37	45	51	58.5	66
°C	1.5.	2.5	7	10.5	14	19.5

	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MM	68	81	82	116	106	75
Inches	2.7	3.2	3.2	4.6	4.2	3.0
°F	71.5	71	63.5	54	42.5	35.5
°C	22	22	18	12.5	6	2

October, when thunder rumbles around the mountains.

Cell Phones (Mobiles)

Most UK and European phones can send and receive calls/SMS on international roaming in Milan and the Lakes. Most GSM (Global System for Mobiles) tri-band cell phones from the US also work. Make sure that 'international roaming' is activated when you purchase your cell phone. But be warned—roaming charges are high for sending (and receiving) SMSs and making calls. Cell phone reception is good in Milan, but intermittent in the Lakes, especially around Como.

You can rent GSM cell phones in Milan for around 40€ per week; try the kiosks at Malpensa and Linate airports. Some hotels also rent phones out, and delegates at the Fiera (see p 74), can hire mobiles for 10€ per day. If you're staying for a length of time, it's cheaper to buy a basic pay-as-you-go mobile package rather than rent a handset. Try Fnac (www.fnac.it, see p 67). Order a prepaid Italian SIM card online from Telestial (www.telestial.com) if you have a GSM 900/1800 compatible cell phone. North Americans can rent a GSM phone before leaving home from InTouch USA (☎ 800/872-7626; www.intouchglobal.com) or RoadPost (☎ 888/290-1606 or 905/272-5665; www.roadpost.com).

Car Rentals

Driving in Milan isn't recommended; the city is compact, the center is pedestrianized, and the public-transport system works punctually, whereas the streets are chaotic and drivers impatient. Parking is elusive and expensive, and fines for infringements heavy. Leave your car at your hotel or park in one of the secure underground parking lots (www.parcheggiitalia.it). Even outside the city, it's possible to get to all the tourist attractions (Como, Maggiore, Varese) by train, although a car permits greater freedom. To explore the Lakes, consider hiring a vehicle for a few days. All major car-rental companies, including Avis (www.avis.com), Budget (www.budget.com), Europcar (www.europcar.com), and Hertz (www.hertz.com), have offices in Milan as well as at Malpensa and Linate airports and Stazione Centrale. Savings can be made by booking online. Sixt (www.sixt.com) and Thrifty (www.thrifty.com or www.thrifty.co.uk) have good deals if you book in advance. Always take your driving license with you when picking up a hire car.

Useful Websites

All the websites below have English content.

www.italiantourism.com: Official site of the Italian Tourist Board; good for maps of areas outside Milan and itineraries.

www.provincia.milano.it: Official site of the Milanese tourist authority; strong on sightseeing information and ticket sales.

www.italytraveller.com: A one-stop hotel booking service, with details of accommodation throughout Italy.

www.hellomilano.it: Online version of the English-speaking weekly listings magazine, with news on shopping, nightlife, bars, and so on.

www.ciaomilano.it: A multi-lingual site with current hotel listings, general tourist information, local events, and festivals.

subway.umka.org: Information on traveling Milan's three-line Metro with ease.

www.sea-aeroportimilano.it: Information on getting to and around Linate and Malpensa airports.

www.sgr.info: Official guide to the best places to visit around lakes Maggiore and Como.

www.italyheaven.co.uk: Detailed guide to lakes Maggiore and Como.

Getting **There**

By Plane

Most travelers from the **US, Australia,** or other European countries land at **Linate** or **Malpensa airports.**

Malpensa

MPX, ☎ 02 74 85 220, www.sea-aeroportimilano.it, 48km west of the city. There are two terminals here; most international flights land at **Terminal 1.**

Bus: Buy tickets in Arrivals for the **Malpensa Bus Express,** which leaves from **Terminal 1;** fares are 7€ and journey time 50 minutes into **Stazione Centrale.** Buses leave every 20 minutes.

Malpensa Express: Departs from **Terminal 1** to **Stazione Nord (Cadorna)** every 30 minutes. Journey time is 40 minutes and fares are 11€.

Taxi: Outside both Arrivals Halls. Current fares into town are around 75€ and the journey takes up to an hour.

Linate

LIN, ☎ 02 74 85 22 00, www.sea-aeroportimilano.it, 7km east of the city center.

Bus: ATM bus route number 73 (www.atm-mi.it/ATM/eng) departs every 10 minutes from outside Arrivals to San Babilia, which connects with Metro Line 1; fares are 1.00€ and the journey takes up to 40 minutes.

Coach: A Star Fly shuttle coach service (☎ 02 58 58 72 37) runs to Stazione Centrale every hour. Buy tickets outside Arrivals; fares are

4.50€ and journey time is 25 minutes.

Taxi: Outside the Arrivals Hall. Fares are around 35€ and journey time is 25 minutes or upwards.

Milan Bergamo Orio al Serio BGY, ☎ 035 326 323, www.milanoorio-airport.it airport caters for European budget flights and is 55km northeast of Milan.

Bus: An hourly yellow shuttle bus runs from outside Arrivals to Stazione Centrale. Fares 7.9€ for a journey of about an hour.

Taxi: Outside Arrivals. Journey times around an hour, with fares about 80€.

See p 163 for details of car hire from the airports.

By Car

The drive to Milan from London is 790km and takes around 13 hours. Entry into the city is along the A8/E62 toll motorway (autostrada) from the west. If driving from Rome, the 480km journey involves six hours on the scary A1 toll autostrada, Italy's main expressway. Drive with dipped headlights on at all times.

By Coach

Coaches run by Autostradale Viaggi (www.autostradale.it) converge on Milan's Autostazione Garibaldi in Piazza Freud from southern and northern Italy.

By Train

Most Italian trains are run by Trenitalia (www.trenitalia.com) and provide a cheap and efficient transport network. Train passengers from the UK can hook up with Eurostar (www.eurostar.com) at London St Pancras for TGV services (www.tgv.co.uk) to Milan via Paris Gare de Lyon, which arrives at Stazione Centrale (☎ 02 63 71 20 16). Journey time is 6 hours 50 minutes. Taxis wait outside the main entrance to the station—but be warned, this vast, 1930s' fascist-era building is currently undergoing restoration work and services are disrupted.

If you're coming from the south of Italy, the TAV high-speed service runs from Rome's Stazione Termini to Stazione Centrale in Milan, traveling 500km in 3½ hours at speeds of 300kph. See ItaliaRail (www.italiarail.com) for details.

Getting **Around**

By Bike

If you hire a bicycle, keep a firm eye on other road users, who can be unpredictable. Tram tracks are also a hazard! I would not recommend this as an option for children. Bikes and motorbikes can be hired through Bianco Blu (www.biancoblu.com), Bici Planet (www.biciplanet.it), and Mata Store (www.pinarello.com), all in central Milan and with English-language websites. Rates vary: 95–100€ per day.

By Boat

It's the only way to travel in the Lakes; see www.navigazionelaghi.it for schedules on lakes Como and Maggiore. For more details, see p 126 and p 144.

By Bus

All public transport in Milan is run by ATM (Azienda Trasporti Milanese SpA, www.atm-mi.it/ATM/eng). Tickets bought for any of the public-transport system can be used on Metro, bus, and train, and must be purchased before the journey. The largest ATM ticket office is in Duomo Metro station (Line 1 or 3), open Mon–Sat 7.45am–7pm, but there are ticket-buying points at

tobacchi (look for the T' symbol outside the shops), some bars out of the center, and most news kiosks. Buses are orange. There are 51 routes stretching out into the suburbs (the Milanese call it the 'hinterland') and buses run from 6am to midnight daily, with night buses substituting along Metro lines 1 and 3 routes after that. See p 9 for ticket details. Bus stop signs are yellow and there is a route planner on each stop. Half bus and half taxi (but cheaper), a blue RadioBus service picks up and drops wherever you need to go 8pm–2am; call ☎ 02 48 03 48 03 with details of pick up and destination after 1pm on the day of travel. Tickets are standard 1.00€ fare plus 1.50–3€ if you're in the city center.

Don't forget to validate your ticket in the yellow machine on the bus and tram, or you will be liable for a hefty fine. Inspections are frequent and being a tourist is no excuse.

By Car

At **Malpensa,** most of the car rental booths are in Terminal One, a free shuttle bus ride away from Terminal 2, where budget flights tend to land. If you're flying into Linate, the rental kiosks are in the Arrivals Hall. See p 160 for a list of rental companies. Don't drive a car in Milan unless you're planning on exploring the Lakes (see p 121); it's too much hassle. Some hotels have private parking but most charge up to 25€ per day for the facility. There's no need for an international driving license if your stay is short.

By Metro

ATM's Metro (www.atm-mi.it/ATM/eng; www.urbanrail.net) is modern, clean, and reliable with trains every few minutes—it's by far the best way to get around the city. There are 87 stations on three lines (red, green, and yellow), of which Lines 1 and 3 are best for sightseeing purposes.

Tickets are bought from orange machines in the Metro stations; a basic ticket costs 1.00€ and is valid for 75 minutes on all three systems; metros, trams, and buses (see p 9). Ticket machines are multilingual and the Metro stations are well signposted. Other useful tickets for tourists are one-day passes (3.00€) and carnets of 10 tickets (9.20€), both valid on all methods of transport. Validate your ticket at the automatic turnstile to access the platform. Trains run from 6.15am–12.15am.

By Taxi

Registered taxis are white, have yellow and black signs on top, and are metered. The meter should be started when you set off; fares are fixed at a price per km, which increases on Sunday and after 10pm at night. Round up the tip to the nearest euro or add 5€ if paying by credit card—check that the driver accepts cards before getting in. Drivers will produce a receipt on demand. There are taxi ranks (with a white sign showing 'TAXI' in black) at the tourist attractions, notably Piazza del Duomo, Teatro La Scala, and Castello Sforzesco, at the airports, and outside the train stations. Avoid bogus taxi drivers who approach you in the airports or train stations; they are likely to overcharge by as much as 600 per cent. Most taxi drivers speak basic English. Hotel and restaurant staff will call cabs for you; otherwise two reliable Milanese companies are: Taxi Blu ☎ 02 4040 and Radio Taxi ☎ 02 8585.

By Train

Run by Trenitalia (www.trenitalia.com), Milan's urban railway trains are cheap, clean (some on the aged side), and efficient. Stazione

Centrale (on Metro lines 2 and 3) and Stazione Nord (Cadorna, on Metro lines 1 and 2) are two useful stations for tourists; both run services to Como and the Lakes. For timetables to Laveno and Como from Stazione Nord, all run by Ferrovie Nord, go to www.ferrovienord.it.

By Tram

Run by ATM (Azienda Trasporti Milanese SpA), trams run around the city center from 6am to midnight, with major routes continuing until 2am. Some of the ancient orange Art Deco-style trams, numbered 20 and with wooden carriages, still run the tourist route, passing close to all the major sights, but sleek new green ones have largely taken over. Tram stop signs are yellow and there is a route planner on each stop. Tickets operate on all three modes of transport; see p 9 for details. Avoid trams during rush hour (7.30–10am, 5–8pm); they are overcrowded and tempers run short.

On Foot

Milan's pedestrianized heart contains most of the major attractions, including the Duomo, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, and parts of the Quad d'Oro. Most of the tourist areas are within walking distance of each other; it's 40 minutes from Brera to the Navigli, and 20 minutes from Castello Sforzesco to the Piazza del Duomo. Out of the central zone, be aware of the traffic; bikers and drivers alike have scant regard for traffic direction and traffic lights as well as pedestrian crossings.

Fast Facts

APARTMENT RENTALS High-end options include The Place Milan (☎ 02 76 02 66 33, www.the-place.it, see p 118), and Glamour Apartments (☎ 02 89 05 53 48, www.glamourapartments.it, see p 115). Rentxpress (☎ 02 583 490, www.rentxpress.com) and Milan Apartment Rental (☎ 02 95 05 689, www.milanapartmentrental.it) both run serviced apartments that won't break the bank, catering for families or business travelers, and kitted out with offices, quality kitchens, and bathrooms.

ATMS/CASHPOINTS All banks offer 24-hour ATMs. Maestro, Cirrus, and Visa cards are accepted at all ATMs. Change currency at banks or exchanges around the tourist areas of Piazza del Duomo and Via Torino. There are automatic money changing machines in Piazza del Duomo, Via Marconi, both airports, and Stazione Centrale. The main post office at Via Cordusio, 4 (see p 166) also changes cash. Avoid changing your cash in the hotels; the exchange rate is appalling.

BANKING HOURS Monday to Friday, 8.30am–1.30pm, 2.30–4.30pm.

CONSULATES **Australian Consulate** 3rd Floor, Via Borgogna, 2, ☎ 02 777 041, www.dfat.gov.au; **Canadian Consulate** Via Vittor Pisani, 19, ☎ 02 675 81, www.international.gc.ca; **UK Consulate** Via San Paolo, 7, ☎ 02 723 001, www.britain.it; **US Consulate** Via Principe Amedeo, 2, ☎ 02 290 351, www.usis.it.

CREDIT CARDS All cards are accepted and Milan has adopted the chip-and-pin payment method. If your card is stolen, call your card companies immediately and file a report at the nearest police precinct (in Milan, call ☎ 02 622 61). Your

credit-card company or insurer will require a police report number or record. **Visa's** US emergency number is ☎ 800/847-2911, or ☎ 0800 89 1725 in the UK (www.visa.com). **American Express** (www.amex.com) cardholders and travelers check holders should call ☎ 800/221-7282 in the US, or ☎ +44 (0)1273 696 933 in the UK. **MasterCard** (www.mastercard.com) holders should call ☎ 800/307-7309 in the US, or ☎ 0800 96 4767 in the UK.

DOCTORS Are on call for emergencies at all times (☎) 7733 (*medici volanti*). Emergency care is free.

ELECTRICITY Hotels operate on 220 volts AC (50 or 60 cycles) with two-pin plugs. UK and US visitors need to buy adaptors, available in all airport shops.

EMERGENCIES For *carabinieri* (national police) ☎ **112**; police (civil matters like lost property) ☎ **113**; fire ☎ **115**; car breakdown ☎ **116**; ambulance ☎ **118**.

English-speaking tourist police: ☎ 02 863 701.

If you can't find the number you're after, look under 'Pronto Soccorso' in the *Pagine Gialle* (Yellow Pages).

Emergency calls from public phones are free.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS Milan is Italy's most relaxed city with regard to homosexuality, and there are gay and lesbian clubs and bars throughout the center (see p 99). www.gayfriendlyitaly.com has information on being gay in Italy, while www.gaymilan.com is the main listings website. www.gayxi.com has listings, transport, and cruising details (under reconstruction at the time of writing).

HOLIDAYS Holidays observed include: January 1 (New Year's Day); January 6 (Epiphany); March/April (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Monday); April 25 (Liberation Day); May 1 (May Day); May/June (Whit Monday); June 2 (Republic Day), August 15 (Assumption of the Virgin Mary); Nov 1 (All Saints' Day); December 7 (Feast of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan's patron saint); December 8 (Immaculate Conception); December 25 (Christmas); and December 26 (Feast of St. Stephen).

INSURANCE All travelers should book travel insurance to cover trip cancellation, lost luggage, medical expenses, or car rental insurance. The following are recommended in the US: **Access America** (☎ 866/807-3982; www.accessamerica.com); **Travel Guard International** (☎ 800/826-4919; www.travelguard.com); **Travel Insured International** (☎ 800/243-3174; www.travelinsured.com); and **Travelex Insurance Services** (☎ 888/457-4602; www.travelex-insurance.com). For travel overseas, most US health plans (including Medicare and Medicaid) do not provide coverage. If you require additional medical insurance, try **MEDEX Assistance** (☎ 410/453-6300; www.medexassist.com) or **Travel Assistance International** (☎ 800/821-2828; www.travelassistance.com).

European travelers should apply for an **EHIC** card (pick up an application form from main post offices or online at www.ehic.org.uk). This lasts 3 to 5 years and entitles holders to reduced or free emergency healthcare across the European Economic Area.

INTERNET Internet access is plentiful, both in cybercafés and hotels, most of which now offer WiFi access. **Metaverse** is at Via Plinio, 48, ☎ 02 29 41 20 74, www.mverse.com; **Punto Futuro Italia**

at Via Santa Valeria, 4, ☎ 02 875 898, www.puntofuturo.net.

LOST PROPERTY The main lost-property office is at Via Friuli, 30, ☎ 02 88 45 39 07. If you lose something on the train, call ☎ 02 63 71 26 67.

MAIL & POSTAGE Post offices open Monday–Friday, around 8.30am–around 1pm, with those in central locations keeping longer hours and opening on Saturday morning. All close on Sunday. Main branches are at Via Cordusio, 4 and Via Sammartini (both open in the week 8am–7pm and Saturday morning). Mail boxes are bright red; buy stamps from tobacconists (*tabacchi*).

MONEY The currency in Italy is the **euro**. For current exchange rates between the euro, sterling, and the dollar, check the currency converter website **www.xe.com**.

OPENING HOURS Stores open Tuesday–Saturday 9.30am–12.30pm, 3.30–7.30pm. Some shops operate a half-day on Monday from 3.30–7.30pm, whereas central department stores are open seven days (see p 66).

PASSPORTS No visas are required for Australian, US, New Zealand, or Canadian visitors to Italy providing their stay does not exceed 90 days. All EU visitors can stay indefinitely. If your passport is lost or stolen, contact your country's consulate immediately (see p 164). Make a copy of your passport's critical pages and keep it separate from your passport.

PHARMACIES Pharmacies *(pharmacia)* have a green neon cross hung outside and operate during normal business hours (see p 66). There are several 24-hour pharmacies in Milan; to locate one, call 'Pronto Farmacia' on ☎ 800 801 185. Central 24-hour pharmacies include: **Farmacia Carlo Erba**, Piazza Duomo, 21, ☎ + 30 02 86 46 48 32; **Farmacia Stazione Centrale**, Galleria delle Partenze, ☎ 02 66 90 935.

RESTROOMS There is a scattering of public restrooms on Milan's Metro system and at stations (with a 0.50€ charge), but otherwise they are few and far between. Most people sneak into bars to use the facilities, although it's courteous to buy a coffee while doing so. Leave small change if there is an attendant.

SAFETY Violent crime is rare in Milan, and almost unheard of around the Lakes. However, as with most major cities, watch out for gangs of pickpockets (often children); be careful with bags and wallets around Metro stations, on the trains, and in crowded places such as Piazza del Duomo. Bags are sometimes snatched by thieves on scooters, so wear yours across your body. Avoid Stazione Centrale and Parco Sempione at night; muggings are commonplace, mainly by drug addicts after cash. Don't leave valuables in your car, especially if you park on the street; there's a good chance they won't be there when you return.

SMOKING Smoking was banned in indoor public places in 2004. This ban covers public transport and the interiors of restaurants, bars, and cafés and is strictly enforced.

TAXES Value-added tax (in Italy it's called *IVA*) is currently at 20 per cent. Travelers from outside the EU can obtain a tax rebate on single purchases over 155€ as they leave the country. Shop where you see the 'Tax-Free Shopping', Eurofund, or Global Refund signs and get a tax-free refund form at the till. Show purchases, receipts, and your passport at customs for a 'IVA back' stamp and head for the refund centers in Linate and Malpensa

airports (open 7am–11pm daily) where your money will be refunded to your account. For more information, go to www.globalrefund.com or www.eurorefund.com.

TELEPHONES The country code is **39**; there are no city codes in Italy and the area code must always be dialed. Milan's numbers have anywhere between five and nine digits. Local pay phone calls cost 0.10€. Some pay phones take coins, others only cards, and still others both coins and cards (*scheda telefonica*) available in denominations of 1–7.50€. Buy these cards from news kiosks and tobacconists (*tabacchi*), and some bars out of the center of town.

For free national telephone enquiries, dial ☎ **12** (Italian language only). For European telephone information, call ☎ **176**, at a pricey 0.60€ per query. For international queries, call ☎ 1790, charged at 0.50€.

For collect international calls, ☎ **170** for an English-speaking operator. To make an international call, dial ☎ 00, followed by country code, area code, and number. Codes are: UK +44; US and Canada +1; Australia +61, Northern Ireland +353, New Zealand +64.

Avoid making international calls from your hotel room; the mark-up is obscene.

TIME ZONE Italy is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the US, and an hour ahead of the UK's GMT. Australia is between nine and six hours ahead of Italy.

TIPPING Round up taxi fares to the nearest euro. Service charges are built into most bills in restaurants; always check before leaving a tip. Otherwise round up to the nearest euro; make it 5–10€ in an expensive restaurant. In bars, leave the change or a single euro coin. In pricy hotels, tip 0.50€ per day for room service and 1.00€ per bag for the porter.

TOURIST INFORMATION **APT**, Piazza del Duomo, 19a, ☎ 02 72 52 43 00. Information on what to see, with leaflets and maps.

APT, Central Station, ☎ 02 72 52 43 60. Information, leaflets, maps, and hotel availability. Both open daily, closed for lunch 1–2pm.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES Milan has been slow in making major attractions fully accessible but all new public buildings are wheelchair accessible, as are most museums, restaurants, large shops, the stations, and the airports. Contact **AIAS Milano** (www.milanopertutti.it) for details in English. For British travelers, the **Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation** (www.radar.org.uk) provides tips for planning holidays overseas. US citizens can contact the Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality (www.sath.org) for travel recommendations. **Flying Wheels Travel** (www.flyingwheelstravel.com) offers escorted tours and **Access-Able Travel Source** (www.access-able.com) has access information for people traveling to Milan. For assistance for disabled travelers on Trenitalia trains, call ☎ 02 67 07 09 58.

WATER Tap water is safe to drink all over Italy, and that includes the drinking fountains in Milan. Non-drinking water is indicated by a sign saying 'Aqua non potabile'.

Milan: **A Brief History**

400BC Celtic Insubres tribe inhabit Milan.

220BC Romans conquer the settlement and name it Mediolanum, which becomes part of the Roman Empire.

286AD Emperor Diocletian declares Milan as the capital of the Western Roman Empire.

313 The Emperor Constantine I guarantees freedom to Christians in the Edict of Milan.

374 Ambrogio made Bishop of Milan. He later becomes patron saint of the city.

402 Warlike Visigoths attack the city and Ravenna replaces Milan as the imperial residence.

452 Milan sacked by Attila.

539 Ostrogoths destroy the city during Gothic War against Byzantine Emperor Justinian I.

570 Milan under control of the Lombards, ruling from the city of Pavia.

600–750 Prosperous Milan reduced to ruins.

774 The Franks invade Milan and Emperor Charlemagne takes the title King of the Lombards.

824 The bishops of Milan become powerful once more. The city re-establishes itself as a commune with economic strength.

1162 Frederick I Barbarossa conquers and destroys Milan, annihilating the power of the bishop-rulers.

1167 Foundation of the Lombard League.

1183 Milan becomes duchy with the Peace of Constance.

1395 Gian Galeazzo Visconti becomes the Duke of Milan and commissions many new buildings.

1447 Filippo Maria Visconti dies without a male heir, ending the Visconti line. Democracy enjoyed during the three-year Ambrosian Republic.

1450 Francesco Sforza conquers Milan. His rule coincides with the Renaissance; great buildings erected in Milan.

1494 Ludovico il Moro Sforza rules Milan. Leonardo da Vinci lives here.

1499 The French King Louis XII lays claim to the duchy.

1525 Northern Italy, including Milan, passes to the Spanish House of Habsburg after the Battle of Pavia.

1560–1648 Counter-Reformation.

1595 Federico Borromeo archbishop of Milan.

1629–31 Plague hits Milan.

1700 The Habsburg line ends with the death of Charles II.

1701 The War of Spanish Succession begins.

1706 The French defeated and forced to yield northern Italy to the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs.

1714 Spain's Italian possessions pass to the Austrians with the Treaty of Utrecht. Lombardy became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1740 Marie-Theresa of Austria rules Milan, which plays leading part in the Enlightenment.

1778 La Scala opera house opens.

1796–97 Napoleon conquers Lombardy and Milan became the capital of the Cisalpine Republic.

1815 Congress of Vienna returns Lombardy, Milan, and the Veneto to Austrian control.

1848 Milanese rebel against Austrians in the *Cinque Giornate* (five-day) Revolt. Crushed by Field Marshall Radetzky.

1859 Austria defeated at the Battle of Solferino by Sardinia and France uniting. Milan liberated.

1861 Italy unified.

1867 Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II opens.

1898 Rebellion against social conditions in Milan led by General Bava Baccaris.

1919 Benito Mussolini forms the core of Italy's Fascist Movement in Milan.

1943 Milan heavily bombed by Allies.

1944 During World War II Germans occupied most of northern Italy until 1945.

1945 Fascists, including Mussolini and his mistress Claretta Petacci, executed at Piazzale Loreto.

1946 La Scala re-opens after bombing damage and Toscanini conducts opening concert.

1969 Bomb in Piazza Fontana; 17 killed and 88 injured. Sparks 13 years of urban terrorism by neo-fascists.

1950–1990 Job seekers emigrate to Milan from the south of Italy and eastern-bloc countries.

1980 Milan becomes economic and industrial powerhouse, and center of the fashion circus.

1992–94 Corruption scandal *Tangentopoli* sees many political leaders brought down.

2002 Small plane flies into 32-story Pirelli building after reporting landing problems, killing three.

2008 David Beckham on loan to AC Milan from LA Galaxy.

Milan's **Architecture**

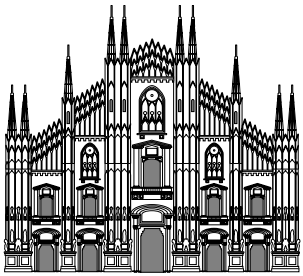
Milan's architecture spans 2,200 years from Ancient Roman through Gothic extravaganzas and Liberty palaces to faceless modern office blocks outside the city center.

Ancient Rome

Although little is left of Roman Mediolanum, remains can be seen today at the half-exposed Anfiteatro Romano (see p 48, bullet 5), dating from the 1st century AD. Just down the road, 16 Corinthian columns rear up outside San Lorenzo Maggiore (see p 25, bullet 2); originally these were part of a Roman chapel. The Museo Archeologico di Milano (see p 49, bullet 8), contains remains of the ancient Roman wall once guarding the city.

Early Christian Architecture

With the signing of the Edict of Milan in 313AD (see p 26), Emperor Constantine kicked off a time of intense church building in the city; San Lorenzo (see p 25, bullet 2),



Duomo.

Sant'Eustorgio (see p 26, bullet 4), and Sant'Ambrogio (see p 28, bullet 6), all have their roots in this era, which saw Roman temple-design being incorporated into Christian buildings, with spacious apses and colonnaded aisles.

Lombard Romanesque Architecture

By the 11th century, Sant'Ambrogio (see p 26, bullet 4) had been much reworked, with the addition of the splendid symmetrical Lombard Romanesque atrium, with carved capitals on its two lines of colonnades plus the square Canons belltower, raised in 1124. Other Romanesque buildings include the façade of San Simpliciano (see p 60, bullet 2) and the belltower of San Lorenzo (see p 25, bullet 2).

Northern Gothic Styling

The Duomo (see p 7, bullet 2) is northern Italy's prime Gothic cathedral, covered in spires, pinnacles, and 2,300 statues of saints, all supported by flying buttresses. Inside light floods through the five aisles from the stained-glass windows; all exuberantly patterned with roses and swirling stonework. The barrel vaulting and brickwork arches inside Santa Maria del Carmine (see p 59, bullet 1) also date from this Gothic period.

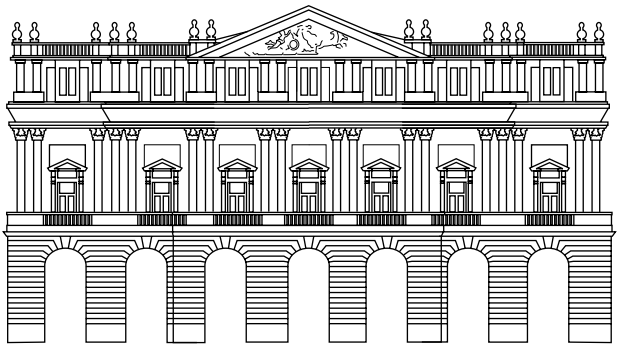
Renaissance Building

When the ruling Sforza family brought the Renaissance to Milan in the 1450s, they also brought in leading classical architects. Antonio Averulino remodeled the Castello Sforzesco to boast a series of arcaded courtyards, porticoes, and towers, aided by Benedetto Ferrini and Bramante. Internally it was decorated and frescoed by the likes of Leonardo da Vinci (see p 41) and Bonifacio Bembo. Bramante was also responsible for the elaborate terracotta-and-cream arcaded apse of Santa Maria delle Grazie (see p 47, bullet 1).

Baroque Milan

Pelligrino Tibaldi (see p 129) was the leading light of Baroque

La Scala.



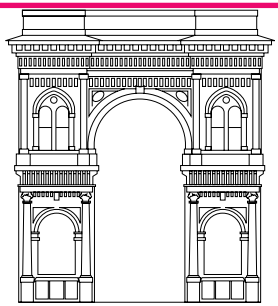
architecture in Milan during the 1550s following the Counter-Reformation; the great whirls and twirls of the carvings inside San Fedele (see p 56, bullet 8) soften the hard, Jesuit lines of the exterior.

Neoclassical Designs

Giuseppe Piermarini (see p 55) reintroduced classical proportions, pediments, and pillars to his buildings in the 18th century. He was responsible for both La Scala (see p 106) and the perfect symmetry of the Palazzo Royale (see p 55, bullet 5), which became the residence of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria when the Habsburgs were ruling Milan.

Art Nouveau & Liberty

The Cimiterio Monumentale (see p 62, bullet 9) is crammed with enormous Art Nouveau tombs dating from the mid-18th to early 20th centuries, many designed by leading exponent of the style, Carlo Maciachini (see p 60), and all rich with natural symbolism, marble, and tiling. Vast Liberty—the Italian version of Art Nouveau—palaces from the early 20th century line many central streets, including Corso Venezia and Corso Magenta. Look out for the wrought-iron balconies and frothy carvings over the doors and windows.



Palazzo Royale.

Today's Milan

Leading modernist edifices, following the flat lines of Fascist architecture, include the Torre Velasca, behind the Duomo and built in the 1950s in a shape taken from the medieval towers of San Gimignano in Tuscany. The renowned Pirelli Building was completed by Gio Ponti (see p 77) in 1960 as a symbol of Milan's post-war regeneration; it was once the tallest building in Milan and has a miniature version of La Madonnina on top (see box p 55).

Useful Phrases & Menu Terms

Useful Words & Phrases

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Hello/Good morning	Buongiorno	bwohn-djor-noh
Hello/Good evening	Buona sera	bwohn-ah say-rah
Good night	Buona notte	bwohn-ah noht-tay
Goodbye	Arrivederci (formal)	ahr-ree-vah-dehr-chee
Hi/Bye	Ciao (or 'salve',informal)	chow
Yes	Sì	see
No	No	noh
Please	Per favore	pehr fah-vohr-eh
Thank you	Grazie	graht-tzee-yey
You're welcome/ Go ahead	Prego	prey-go

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
Do you speak English?	Parla inglese?	pahr-lah een-gleh-zeh?
I don't speak Italian	Non parlo italiano	nohn parl-loh ee-tah-lyah-noh
Excuse me (apologizing, interrupting)	Mi scusi	mee skoo-ze
Excuse me (getting through a crowd	Permesso	pehr-mehs-soh
OK (agreeing)	Va bene	vah beh-neh
Where is . . . ?	Dov'è . . . ?	doh-vey
the bathroom	il bagno	eel bahn-nyoh
a restaurant	un ristorante	oon reest-ohr-ahnt-eh
the hospital	l'ospedale	oh-speh-dah-leh
a hotel	un albergo	oon ahl-behr-goh
How much does it cost?	Quanto costa?	kwan-toh coh-sta
What time is it?	Che ore sono?	kay or-ay soh-noh
The check, please	Il conto, per favore	eel kon-toh pehr fah-vohr-eh
When?	Quando?	kwan-doh
Yesterday	Ieri	ee-yehr-ree
Today	Oggi	oh-jee
Tomorrow	Domani	doh-mah-nee
Breakfast	Prima colazione	pree-mah coh-laht-tzee-ohn-ay
Lunch	Pranzo	prahn-zoh
Dinner	Cena	chay-nah
Monday	Lunedì	loo-nay-dee
Tuesday	Martedì	mart-ay-dee
Wednesday	Mercoledì	mehr-cohl-ay-dee
Thursday	Giovedì	joh-vay-dee
Friday	Venerdì	ven-nehr-dee
Saturday	Sabato	sah-bah-toh
Sunday	Domenica	doh-mehn-nee-kah

NUMBERS

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
1	uno	oo-noh
2	due	doo-ay
3	tre	tray
4	quattro	kwah-troh
5	cinque	cheen-kway
6	sei	say
7	sette	set-tay
8	otto	oh-toh
9	nove	noh-vay
10	dieci	dee-ay-chee
11	undici	oon-dee-chee
20	venti	vehn-tee
21	ventuno	vehn-toon-oh

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	PRONUNCIATION
22	venti due	vehn-tee doo-ay
30	trenta	trehn-tah
40	quaranta	kwah-rahn-tah
50	cinquanta	cheen-kwan-tah
60	sessanta	sehs-sahn-tah
70	settanta	seht-tahn-tah
80	ottanta	oht-tahn-tah
90	novanta	noh-vahnt-tah
100	cento	chen-toh
1,000	mille	mee-lay
5,000	cinquemila	cheen-kway mee-lah
10,000	dieci milla	dee-ay-chee mee-lah

Menu Terms

Abbacchio Roast haunch or shoulder of lamb baked and served in a casserole and sometimes flavored with anchovies.

Agnolotti A crescent-shape pasta shell stuffed with a mix of chopped meat, spices, vegetables, and cheese; when prepared in rectangular versions, the same combination of ingredients is identified as ravioli.

Amaretti Crunchy, sweet almond-flavored macaroons.

Anguilla alla veneziana Eel cooked in a sauce made from tuna and lemon.

Antipasti Succulent tidbits served at the beginning of a meal (before the pasta), whose ingredients might include slices of cured meats, seafood (especially shellfish), and cooked and seasoned vegetables.

Aragosta Lobster.

Arrosto Roasted meat.

Baccalà Dried and salted codfish.

Bagna cauda Hot and well-seasoned sauce, heavily flavored with anchovies, designed for dipping raw vegetables; literally translated as 'hot bath.'

Bistecca alla fiorentina Florentine-style steaks, coated before grilling with olive oil, pepper, lemon juice, salt, and parsley.

Bocconcini Veal layered with ham and cheese, and then fried.

Bollito misto Assorted boiled meats served on a single platter.

Braciola Pork chop.

Bresaola Air-dried spiced beef.

Bruschetta Toasted bread, heavily slathered with olive oil and garlic and often topped with tomatoes.

Bucatini Coarsely textured hollow spaghetti.

Busecca alla Milanese Tripe (beef stomach) flavored with herbs and vegetables.

Cacciucco ali livornese Seafood stew.

Calzone Pizza dough rolled with the chef's choice of sausage, tomatoes, cheese, and so on and then baked into a kind of savory turnover.

Cannelloni Tubular dough stuffed with meat, cheese, or vegetables and then baked in a creamy white sauce.

Cappellacci alla ferrarese Pasta stuffed with pumpkin.

Cappelletti Small ravioli ('little hats') stuffed with meat or cheese.

Carciofi Artichokes.

Carpaccio Thin slices of raw cured beef, sometimes in a piquant sauce.

Cassatta alla siciliana A richly caloric dessert that combines layers of sponge cake, sweetened ricotta cheese, and candied fruit, bound together with chocolate buttercream icing.

Cervello al burro nero Brains in black-butter sauce.

Cima alla genovese Baked filet of veal rolled into a tube-shape package containing eggs, mushrooms, and sausage.
Coppa Cured morsels of pork filet encased in sausage skins, served in slices.
Costoletta alla milanese Veal cutlet dredged in bread crumbs, fried, and sometimes flavored with cheese.
Cozze Mussels.
Fagioli White beans.
Fave Fava beans.
Fegato alla veneziana Thinly sliced calves' liver fried with salt, pepper, and onions.
Focaccia Ideally, concocted from potato-based dough left to rise slowly for several hours and then garnished with tomato sauce, garlic, basil, salt, and pepper, and drizzled with olive oil; similar to a deep-dish pizza most popular in the deep South, especially Bari.
Fontina Rich cow's milk cheese.
Frittata Italian omelet.
Fritto misto A deep-fried medley of whatever small fish, shellfish, and squid are available in the marketplace that day.
Fusilli Spiral-shape pasta.
Gelato (produzione propria) Ice cream (homemade).
Gnocchi Dumplings usually made from potatoes (gnocchi alla patate) or from semolina (gnocchi alla romana), often stuffed with combinations of cheese, spinach, vegetables, or whatever combinations strike the chef's fancy.
Gorgonzola One of the most famous blue-veined cheeses of Europe—strong, creamy, and aromatic.
Granita Flavored ice, usually with lemon or coffee.
Insalata di frutti di mare Seafood salad (usually including shrimp and squid) garnished with pickles, lemon, olives, and spices.
Involtini Thinly sliced beef, veal, or pork rolled, stuffed, and fried.
Minestrone A rich and savory vegetable soup usually sprinkled with grated parmigiano and studded with noodles.
Mortadella Mild pork sausage, fashioned into large cylinders and served sliced; the original lunchmeat bologna (because its most famous center of production is Bologna).
Mozzarella A nonfermented cheese, made from the fresh milk of a buffalo (or, if unavailable, from a cow), boiled, and then kneaded into a rounded ball, served fresh.
Mozzarella con pomodori (also 'caprese') Fresh tomatoes with fresh mozzarella, basil, pepper, and olive oil.
Nervetti A northern Italian antipasto made from chewy pieces of calves' feet or shins.
Osso buco Beef or veal knuckle slowly braised until the cartilage is tender and then served with a highly flavored sauce.
Pancetta Herb-flavored pork belly, rolled into a cylinder and sliced—the Italian bacon.
Panettone Sweet yellow bread baked in the form of a brioche.
Panna Heavy cream.
Pansotti Pasta stuffed with greens, herbs, and cheeses, usually served with a walnut sauce.
Pappardelle alle lepre Pasta with rabbit sauce.
Parmigiano Parmesan, a hard and salty yellow cheese usually grated over pastas and soups but also eaten alone; also known as granna. The best is Parmigiano reggiano.

Peperoni Green, yellow, or red sweet peppers (not to be confused with pepperoni).
Pesci al cartoccio Fish baked in a parchment envelope with onions, parsley, and herbs.
Pesto A flavorful green sauce made from basil leaves, cheese, garlic, marjoram, and (if available) pine nuts.
Piccata al Marsala Thin escalope of veal braised in a pungent sauce flavored with Marsala wine.
Piselli al prosciutto Peas with strips of ham.
Pizzaiola A process in which something (usually a beefsteak) is covered in a tomato-and-oregano sauce.
Polenta Thick porridge or mush made from cornmeal flour.
Polenta de uccelli Assorted small birds roasted on a spit and served with polenta.
Polenta e coniglio Rabbit stew served with polenta.
Polla alla cacciatore Chicken with tomatoes and mushrooms cooked in wine.
Pollo alla diavola Highly spiced grilled chicken.
Ragù Meat sauce.
Ricotta A soft bland cheese made from cow's or sheep's milk.
Risotto Italian rice.
Risotto alla milanese Rice with saffron and wine.
Salsa verde 'Green sauce,' made from capers, anchovies, lemon juice and/or vinegar, and parsley.
Saltimbocca Veal scallop layered with prosciutto and sage; its name literally translates as 'jump in your mouth,' a reference to its tart and savory flavor.
Salvia Sage.
Scaloppina alla Valdostana Escalope of veal stuffed with cheese and ham.
Scaloppine Thin slices of veal coated in flour and sautéed in butter.
Semifreddo A frozen dessert; usually ice cream with sponge cake.
Seppia Cuttlefish (a kind of squid); its black ink is used for flavoring in certain sauces for pasta and also in risotto dishes.
Sogliola Sole.
Spiedini Pieces of meat grilled on a skewer over an open flame.
Strangolaprete Small nuggets of pasta, usually served with sauce; the name is literally translated as 'priest-choker.'
Stufato Beef braised in white wine with vegetables.
Tagliatelle Flat egg noodles.
Tonno Tuna.
Tortelli Pasta dumplings stuffed with ricotta and greens.
Tortellini Rings of dough stuffed with minced and seasoned meat, and served either in soups or as a full-fledged pasta covered with sauce.
Trenette Thin noodles served with pesto sauce and potatoes.
Trippe alla fiorentina Beef tripe (stomach).
Vermicelli Very thin spaghetti.
Vitello tonnato Cold sliced veal covered with tuna-fish sauce.
Zabaglione/zabaione Egg yolks whipped into the consistency of a custard, flavored with Marsala, and served warm as a dessert.
Zampone Pig's trotter stuffed with spicy seasoned pork, boiled and sliced.
Zuccotto A liqueur-soaked sponge cake, molded into a dome and layered with chocolate, nuts, and whipped cream.
Zuppa inglese Sponge cake soaked in custard.

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To call Italy from another country: *Dial the international access code (US or Canada 011, UK or New Zealand 00, Australia 0011) followed by the country code (39), and then the local number.*

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CLOTHING SIZES

WOMEN			MEN			CHILDREN	
UK	US	Europe	UK Metric (cm)	US	Europe	UK Metric (Ht cm)	US
8	6	36	91	36	46	109	4
10	8	38	97	38	48	122	6
12	10	40	102	40	50	140	8
14	12	42	107	42	52	147	10
16	14	44	112	44	54	152	12
18	16	46				157	14
20	18	48					

METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE

110˚F	
100˚F	40˚C
90˚F	
80˚F	30˚C
70˚F	
60˚F	20˚C
50˚F	
40˚F	10˚C
32˚F	0˚C
20˚F	
10˚F	-10˚C
0˚F	-18˚C
-10˚F	
-20˚F	-30˚C

To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and multiply by 5/9 (.555)
To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8 and add 32

32˚F = 0˚C

DISTANCE

To convert	*multiply by*
inches to centimeters	2.54
centimeters to inches	.39
feet to meters	.30
meters to feet	3.28
yards to meters	.91
meters to yards	1.09
miles to kilometers	1.61
kilometers to miles	.62

1 ft = .30 m ***1 mile = 1.6 km***
1 m = 3.3 ft ***1 km = .62 mile***

WEIGHT

To convert	*multiply by*
Ounces to grams	28.35
Grams to ounces	.035
Pounds to kilograms	.45
Kilograms to pounds	2.20

1 ounce = 28 grams
1 pound = .4555 kilogram

1 gram = .04 ounce
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert	*multiply by*
Gallons to liters	4.55
Liters to gallons	.22
Pints to liters	.56
Liters to pints	1.76

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